



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

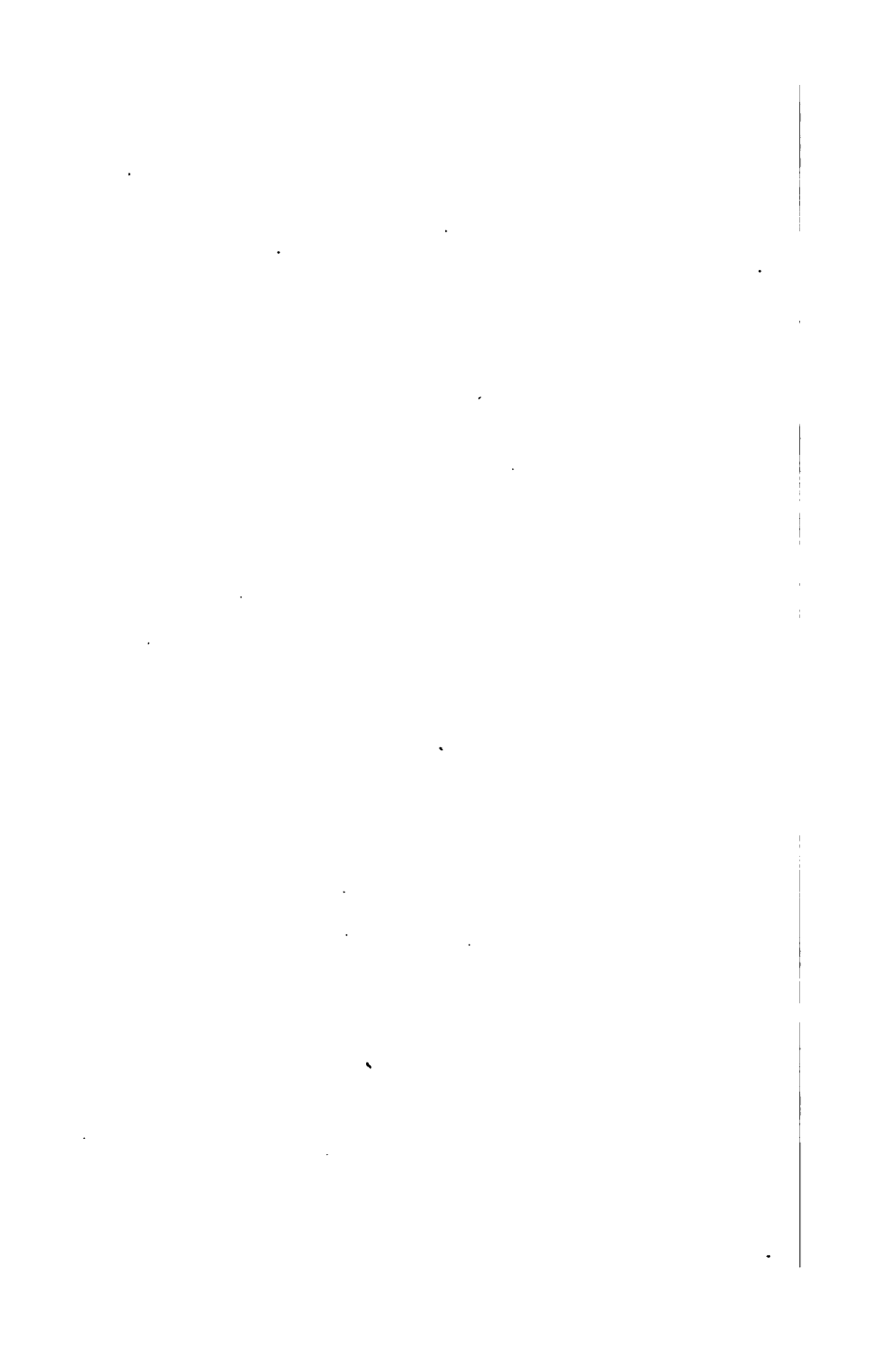
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



44. 922.





AMY HERBERT.

BY A LADY.

Gift of the Rev. W. Sewell

EDITED BY

THE REV. W. SEWELL, B.D.

FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

" Why should we fear Youth's draught of joy,
If pure, would sparkle less ?
Why should the cup the sooner cloy,
Which God hath deign'd to bless ? "



Christian Year.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1844.

[LONDON :
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE, }
New-Street-Square,

PREFACE.

THE following little tale was written by a lady for the use of a young member of her own family.

The Editor is responsible for nothing but recommending its publication, and suggesting a few verbal corrections.

But it is hoped that it may prove no valueless addition to a class of literature now much needed: which may interest the young under the form of narrative, and exhibit, at the same time, a Christian tone, and temper, and Christian truth, without obtruding either in a manner unsuited to a work of amusement.

The Editor has willingly undertaken to revise the publication, under the impression that books intended for the young should, as much as possible, be superintended by some clergyman, who may be responsible for their principles.

February 6. 1844.

NOTICE.

THE Publishers of this work beg to state that it is private property, protected by the late Copyright Act, the 5 & 6 Victoria, c. 45. They beg also to state that any person having in his possession, within the United Kingdom, for sale or hire, one or more copies printed abroad of any English work protected by the Act referred to, is liable to a penalty, which, in cases affecting their interest, they intend to enforce.

The Public are farther informed that the Act 5 & 6 Victoria, c. 47. s. 24., prohibits the importation of all works printed in foreign countries, of which the copyright is not expired. Even single copies, though for the especial use of the importers and marked with their names, are excluded; and the Customs officers in the different ports are strictly enjoined to carry this regulation into effect.

N.B. — The above regulations are in force in all British colonies and dependencies, as well as in the United Kingdom.

AMY HERBERT.

CHAPTER I.

IN a remote picturesque village, on the borders of one of the few remaining forests in England, was situated the home of Amy Herbert. It was a lovely cottage, with a thatched roof and latticed windows, covered with creepers and roses, and standing upon a smooth velvet lawn, which gently sloped to the edge of a clear stream, that flowed sparkling along at the bottom of the garden. A small but very beautiful pleasure-ground divided it from the forest, which stretched far away behind for many miles, whilst in the front it commanded a view over the village of Emmerton, with its scattered dwellings and its grey church-tower, and the distant country beyond. The interior of the cottage consisted of a drawing-room with windows opening upon the lawn, a small study, a dining-room which looked out on the most retired part of the garden, and several bedrooms; and it was here that Amy Herbert passed the earliest and the happiest portion of her life: and though to some it might have seemed that her pleasures could have been but few, as she had no companions of her own age, not many servants to wait upon her, and no money to expend on whatever might be the fancy of the moment, yet it may be doubted whether any of those who have

been brought up in the midst of luxury have ever spent so happy a childhood as hers. For Amy lived in her quiet home with the mother who to her was all in all; and when she sat by her side at work, or read to her aloud, or walked with her, or listened to her sweet voice as she sang her favourite songs, she had not a wish for any thing else that the world could give. In the summer, Amy's mornings were employed in learning from her mother all that was considered necessary for the education of a lady; for Mrs. Herbert, besides possessing a well-cultivated mind, understood both music and drawing, and spared neither time nor trouble in endeavouring to give her child a taste for the same pursuits. The afternoons were often spent in an arbour, shut out from the view of every passer-by, where Amy read to her mother the books which most interested her; and in the evening she generally walked with her into the village, either to inquire after some of their poor neighbours, or to pay a visit to the rectory, where the affection with which she was received was always a source of enjoyment, though there were no children to be her play-fellows. Occasionally, also, Amy would persuade her mother to wander with her into the forest, and there, leaving her seated on the trunk of some old tree with her book or her work, she would search amongst the thick underwood for wild flowers or wood strawberries, and return to her, triumphantly laden, as she said, with spoils; and when the falling dews, and the gathering twilight told that it was the hour of rest, Amy, kneeling in her chamber, repeated her evening prayers, and, after receiving her mother's last fond kiss and her fervent blessing, laid her head upon her pillow, to dream of the joys of the past day and the interests of the coming morrow.

The winter also brought its delights: the warm

fireside in the morning, and the quick walk in the middle of the day when the sun was shining and the earth glittering with the frost, and the tales of days and people long gone by, with which Mrs. Herbert would amuse her little girl in the dusky twilight; whilst in the evening came the bright lamp and the hissing urn, to make them forget that there was any thing like cold or discomfort to be endured without. And so Amy's childhood passed tranquilly on: not that it was entirely free from interruptions and disappointments, or that she was always able to follow her own inclinations; for there were gloomy days, and causes of vexation, and she had faults which, at times, interfered with her happiness; but her annoyances were soon over; and whenever she gave way to any evil feelings, either of ill temper, indolence, or carelessness, the sorrowful expression of her mother's countenance, and the grave tone of her voice, never failed to recall her quickly to a better mind.

There were, besides, other pleasures to vary the regularity of Amy's life: a drive in the rector's carriage to the neighbouring town, or an invitation to drink tea at the parsonage, or, what she most delighted in, a long walk with her mother, to wander over a large old house, which was about two miles distant from the cottage, and situated on the same side of the forest, though in a different direction from the village. Emmerton Hall was indeed a most interesting place: the house—the work of ages passed away—was of grey stone, deeply stained by exposure to the severity of many a wintry storm: it was a large irregular building, with high gable ends, deep oriel windows, turrets with pointed pinnacles, and heavy clustering chimneys nearly hidden by masses of the rich dark ivy which covered a great proportion of the walls; the principal front con-

sisted of the original three-gabled house and two projecting wings, which had been added at a later period, and along its whole length extended a broad gravel terrace divided from the other part of the grounds by a stone balustrade, and ornamented at regular intervals with large Italian vases. From this terrace a flight of steps at each end descended to the pleasure-garden, which was laid out in green lawns, and shrubberies, and winding walks, and bounded by a clear sheet of water flowing through the whole of the demesne; on the other side of the water stretched a richly wooded park that had once formed a portion of the forest, whilst from the terrace might be seen beyond this a wide expanse of lovely country, — corn-fields, meadows, villages, and churches, blended together in the soft mists of the distance, and terminated by the faint shadow which marked the outline of one of the highest ranges of hills in all England.

To the right of the house the ground rose abruptly in a hill of considerable height, the sides of which had been partly formed into smooth grassy terraces, and partly planted with beech, ash, elm, and oak trees, and amongst these many walks were cut, ascending gradually to the top, and opening at length upon a line of down, from whence might be discovered a view so extensive as to reach even to the glittering waves of the ocean.

At the back and to the left of the mansion, the grounds were of great extent, and still beyond them lay the park, carrying the eye into deep hollows and sunny glades, till its furthest trees were lost amongst the rich foliage of the adjacent forest.

Such was the exterior of Emmerton Hall, and the interior suited well with it in beauty. The oldest part of the building consisted, indeed, of long low chambers, wainscotted with dark oak, and giving

an idea of solemnity, if not of gloom ; but the wings, which were of a later date, contained spacious saloons and large lofty drawing-rooms, hung with paintings, and rich in splendid, though old-fashioned, furniture, that would have done honour to the palace of the proudest noble in the land. It was not amongst these, however, that Amy Herbert found her chief enjoyment — she cared little for the more modern additions ; but her great pleasure was to wander through the long passages, and explore the dark rooms which had for years been disused, while the silent mansion echoed with the gay sounds of her young voice, as she discovered some hitherto unknown closet, or started back, half amused and half frightened, at the grim visage of some valiant knight or ancient lady which stared at her from the walls.

There was a chapel, too, attached to the house ; and great was Amy's delight to look down from the private gallery that had been specially reserved for the ladies of the family, upon the massive oaken seats ranged on each side of the narrow aisle, and while the rays of the sun, streaming through the painted glass of the east window, lighted up every corner of the building with a rich unearthly hue, to people them in her own imagination with the servants and retainers who she had been told once occupied them daily.

For the first few years of her life Amy's visits to Emmerton Hall had been those of unmixed happiness ; but as she grew older, and learnt to feel more and more that no joy was complete unless her mother could share it with her, she began to perceive that, however willingly Mrs. Herbert might grant her petition to visit the old house, and however patiently she might wait whilst she satisfied all her childish curiosity ; yet, at their return home, there was always a look of sorrow on her countenance, and

sometimes even a tear glistening in her eye ; and the cause of this she was soon able to understand, for Emmerton had been to Mrs. Herbert all that the little cottage was to Amy. It had been the scene of her earliest pleasures—the home of her childhood—the spot where she had dwelt with parents, brothers, sisters, and friends—who were now, some dead, some scattered in distant countries, and all so far from her as to make her feel lonely and sad in the halls where once she had known little but enjoyment. But it was not till Amy had nearly reached her twelfth year that she became aware of the increasing extent of the painful feelings excited in her mother's mind by these visits to the Hall. During the first year of her marriage Mrs. Herbert had lived at the cottage ; but her family were still settled at Emmerton, and the separation was merely nominal. After that time the death of her father and mother broke, in a great degree, the ties which had bound her to her early home ; for her brother on whom the property devolved, had married a lady whose proud disposition suited but ill with Mrs. Herbert's meek spirit ; and when, on the death of a relation, Mr. Harrington became the owner of a still finer estate in another county, Emmerton was almost deserted. It was true he returned to it occasionally, but his visits were less and less frequent ; and although the steward and housekeeper were ordered to keep it in complete repair, it was only as a place for show, and because his pride would not permit him to sell or let an old family residence.

All this was a great trial for Mrs. Herbert, though whilst Colonel Herbert was with her it was comparatively but little felt ; but the duties of his profession at last called him to a foreign land, and it was then that she first knew the real loneliness of her situation, the only alleviation being the society

of her friends at the parsonage, and the delight of receiving constant and cheerful letters from abroad. At the period, however, just mentioned, when Amy was about twelve years of age, the time appointed for Colonel Herbert's absence had expired; but no news had been received from him for a considerable time. Post after post arrived without letters from him: friends came back from the country to which he had been sent, but none brought intelligence of him. Mrs. Herbert's heart sank within her; the most sad forebodings took possession of her mind; and even the company of Amy often served only to increase her melancholy, as it reminded her more forcibly of the probable failure of those visions of future happiness, in which she had indulged when dwelling upon the prospect of her husband's return to his native land, to spend the remainder of his days with her and with his child.

Continued anxiety at length seriously affected Mrs. Herbert's health; and even Amy, young as she was, became sensible of it, and learnt to look eagerly for the daily post, in hopes that it might bring some letter which would make her mother smile again as she had been used to do, while she seldom expressed a wish to go to Emmerton, since it only added to Mrs. Herbert's depression, by reminding her of the absence of her relations as well as of that of her husband. Still Amy did not fully enter into the causes of her mother's uneasiness; and when she stationed herself at the white garden-gate every morning to watch for the old postman, it was with a feeling of expectation very different from the nervous eagerness with which Mrs. Herbert longed for his arrival.

"Here he is, mamma!" she exclaimed joyously, as she ran to the drawing-room window one lovely summer morning, after having waited unusually long

at the gate. "Here he is! just turning the corner of the lane. Do let me go and meet him; I shall bring the letters much quicker than he will, and there must be one from papa to-day."

Mrs. Herbert half smiled as she kissed her child's forehead, and parted her dark ringlets. "You may go, love," she said; and Amy waited to hear no more. In a minute she was at the end of the lane, entreating the old postman to give her the letters; but he was both deaf and obstinate, and resolved that no one should have the honour of delivering them but himself; and Amy, after repeatedly urging her request in vain, returned disappointed to her mother. The delay had but increased Mrs. Herbert's painful anxiety; and when the man appeared with the letter—for there was but one—she felt as if she had scarcely the power to take it from him.

"It is from papa, I am sure," said Amy; but Mrs. Herbert shook her head, and her face became very pale as she saw the deep black edge. With a trembling hand she tore open the letter; and Amy seeing that something unusual was the matter, looked earnestly in her face while she read. For a moment her mother's countenance wore the appearance of intense anguish, but it was soon succeeded by an expression of comparative relief; and when she had concluded, although she was grave and melancholy, yet it was evident that the news had not been what she so much dreaded.

"Is it from papa?" asked Amy; "and is he quite well, and coming home soon?"

"It is from your uncle Harrington, my dear," said Mrs. Herbert: "he gives me no information about your papa, and he writes in great distress."

"Why, why, mamma!" exclaimed Amy eagerly, "does it make you unhappy too?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Herbert; "I must always be

sad when I know that your uncle is in affliction. You have lost your cousin Edward, Amy; he has died quite suddenly, and ——” but here Mrs. Herbert paused, for her voice failed her. Amy endeavoured to comfort her; but it was not in her power to stop the course of her mother’s grief, and for a few minutes she gave way to it without restraint; and then rousing herself, she said, “I ought to be thankful that I have been spared a still greater trial; for, though I can feel bitterly for my poor brother, it would have been far worse if I had known Edward well; and one thing, Amy, which will give you pleasure in the midst of all this sorrow is, that your uncle tells me he intends coming to Emmerton immediately; and he begs me to go there, and give orders for every thing being prepared for them.”

“To Emmerton, mamma!” exclaimed Amy with delight, forgetting what had given rise to this sudden plan. “Will they really come to Emmerton — my uncle, and aunt, and all my cousins? Oh! you will look happy again then.”

“I will try to do so, at least,” said Mrs. Herbert; “for it is only selfishness to destroy your happiness, my dear child, by anxiety, which you cannot understand. But indeed you must not expect any great enjoyment at first; for your uncle’s letter speaks of himself and all the family as being in the greatest distress.”

“Ah! but,” said Amy, “when they come to Emmerton they must be cheerful. To be sure,” she added, looking suddenly grave, “it is very sad to think that Edward will not be with them; but then, mamma, I dare say he is gone to heaven, so why should they be so very sorry?”

“Should not you be very sorry to part from me, Amy, if I were to die? and yet I trust that when it

shall please God that I should do so, He will take me to heaven."

"O mamma! don't talk so," said Amy, her eyes filling with tears; "you know I should be so miserable. I should die too."

"No, my love," replied Mrs. Herbert, "I hope you would not die; for you may always be happy whether I am with you or not, when you have God to watch over you: but I wished to show you that you must not expect other people to be less sorrowful than you would be yourself in such a situation. Your cousins will, of course, be unhappy when they first come to Emmerton."

"But when will it be?" asked Amy.

Not till the week after next," answered Mrs. Herbert; "for the house must be made ready for them."

"Oh! such a long, long time!" sighed Amy. There are five days to the end of this week; and then will they come on the Monday week after?"

"They have not fixed the day, my dear, so you will try and wait patiently, I know," said Mrs. Herbert; and now you must get your lessons and read by yourself this morning, for I wish to be alone in my own room."

This was not pleasant news to Amy, but she made no objection, and with her book in her hand seated herself at the window. It was a harder task to learn on that morning than she had ever before found it; for, notwithstanding all her endeavours, some thoughts of Emmerton would creep into her mind perpetually. First, she fancied what rooms her cousins would choose; then, whether they would like the same that she did; whether any of the old dark chambers would be used; and, above all, whether her uncle would have prayers in the chapel every morning, and fill it with his ser-

vants, so that she might really see it as she had been told it used to be.

The very loveliness of the day only served to increase her distraction of mind. The sunlight was glancing on the turf, the butterflies were settling continually on the flowers by the window, and the birds were singing gaily amongst the trees; and delightful as all this really was, it only made Amy feel the stronger wish to be at that moment running over the lawns at Emmerton, or standing by the side of the lake, watching the swans and the other water-fowl as they sailed proudly along on the bosom of the calm water.

"I shall never learn these tiresome lessons, mamma," she exclaimed, as Mrs. Herbert entered the room after an absence of about a quarter of an hour.

"And why not, my love? why should it be more difficult now than at any other time?"

"Because I am so longing to be at Emmerton, mamma; and I cannot fix my attention to them. Please let me leave off now, and I will learn a double quantity to-morrow."

"No, Amy; that is a great mistake. To-morrow will have enough to do in its own occupations, without burdening it with those of to-day. Besides, my dear, this is just the opportunity for learning to do in a little way what will be required of you perpetually during your whole life—to conquer your own inclinations: you will be infinitely the happier for it afterwards."

Amy looked as if she could not quite believe this, but she did not speak in reply.

"You will endeavour, I am sure, my dear child," continued Mrs. Herbert, "if it is only to please me; you know my greatest wish is to teach you to do what is right, without thinking of what is pleasant;

so make one more effort, and turn your face from the window that you may have nothing to divide your thoughts, and then the lessons will soon be learned."

Mrs. Herbert left the room; and Amy, obeying her directions, seated herself with her back to the window, making a firm resolution in her own mind that she would not look up from her book till her lessons were ready; and when her mother reappeared, they were repeated without a fault. Mrs. Herbert's smile sufficiently repaid her for the exertion, and with renewed pleasure she continued her usual morning occupations.

"And now, mamma," she exclaimed, as she finished her reading, "I may think about Emmerton. Will you tell me if you are really going there this afternoon?"

"We will set off immediately after dinner," replied Mrs. Herbert; "and as I cannot walk so far, I have sent to the parsonage to borrow Mr. Walton's carriage."

"Shall you stay all the afternoon, mamma? and will you let me hear all you say to Mrs. Bridget and Stephen?"

"I am afraid that will not interest you much, my dear," replied Mrs. Herbert smiling; "but you deserve to have your wishes granted, to reward you for your endeavours this morning. Was I not right in saying that you would be far happier if you attended to your lessons first, and thought of your amusements afterwards?"

"Ah! mamma," said Amy, "you know you are always right, and I am always wrong; but then it does not signify so much while you are with me to teach me."

Mrs. Herbert sighed. "You must not look to me, my dear child: I cannot keep you right. It is God

alone who can do that, and He only knows how long I may live to tell you what you ought to do. But do not look so grave now, I did not mean to make you unhappy. You must get your bonnet and take one turn with me in the shady walk, and by that time dinner will be ready."

CHAP. II.

THAT afternoon was one of perfect enjoyment to Amy. The drive in the rector's carriage was an unusual treat, and the road through the forest had never before seemed so beautiful ; the light danced amongst the trees, and sparkled on the gay primroses, and harebells, and the deep blue violets, which peeped from amongst the thick underwood. The rich moss which covered the trunks of the old oak trees, was of a hue so bright as to be surpassed only by the vivid green of the young leaves, which had reached their full beauty, undimmed as yet by the scorching rays of the summer's sun ; and when at length they reached the park gate of Emmerton, and drove under the long rows of oaks and chestnuts, and by the side of the clear silver lake, Amy's delight was unbounded. Several months had passed since she had last been there, and the beauty of the place was now increased by the thought that she should soon be able to visit it constantly, and might perhaps, at times, spend days, and even weeks, there with her cousins.

"Dear, dear mamma!" she exclaimed, as she jumped up in the carriage to look at the lake, "do you think my uncle can be unhappy while he is here?"

"Why should he not be, my love?" asked Mrs. Herbert.

"Oh! because it is so beautiful, mamma," said Amy; "and it is all his own, and he may go where he pleases, and do what he pleases, and you say he has plenty of money: I am sure if I were he, I

should have nothing to wish for. If I lived at Emmerton, nothing could ever happen to vex me, except," she added, looking grave, as she saw a tear in her mother's eye, "except if any thing were the matter with you ; but here comes Stephen down the avenue. I wonder what he will say when he hears that my uncle is coming back."

The steward approached the carriage as Amy spoke ; he was a tall hearty man, of about seventy, with a step as firm, and a back as unbent, as if he had numbered thirty years less. His features were very strongly marked, and expressive of great intelligence, and might even have been called handsome, though his complexion was completely tanned by age, and many years' exposure to the variations of the weather. There was a bright happy look in his clear grey eye, and a smile about his mouth, and yet a person who had watched him narrowly might have seen the trace of care on his brow ; but it seemed as if it had only recently been acquired, as if joyousness were the natural inmate of his breast, and melancholy only its occasional visitant : and so indeed it was. Stephen Browning had entered the service of Mrs. Herbert's father when quite a lad, and had risen from being a mere stable boy to the higher offices of groom and coachman : he had been the instructor of the young ladies of the family in horsemanship, and of the young gentlemen in all their boyish sports, and considered himself—and was indeed considered by many others—as the most important personage about Emmerton Hall, always excepting Mr. Harrington.

During this period his life had been a very happy one ; and the pride with which he watched the children as they grew up, was scarcely inferior to that of their parents. Even the death of old Mr. Harrington did not in any serious degree disturb

his peace of mind, after the first shock was over ; for death, as he said, was the lot of all men, and 'twas no use to grieve for him who was gone to happiness : and so Stephen consoled himself for his loss ; and still looked with delight upon the scenes he had known from his childhood, and interested himself as much in the new generation that had sprung up, as he had done in those who had long been beyond his instruction. But a most bitter trial awaited him in the removal of the family from Emmerton, and it was one for which he was totally unprepared ; the first intelligence was so astounding, that it was some time before he could be induced to believe it ; and when at last the truth forced itself upon his mind, he sank into a state of listless indifference, which was for a time in no slight degree alarming. He did, however, recover from it ; and, at Mr. Harrington's request, consented to remain at the Hall, and to take charge of it as steward ; but his occupations—his enjoyments, all seemed gone, and his only remaining pleasure was to visit the cottage, and talk over the old days with Mrs. Herbert, and tell Amy stories of the feats of her uncles and aunts in horsemanship, long before, as he said, she was ever thought of. For Mrs. Bridget the housekeeper, who had only lived about twelve years in the family, Stephen had an especial contempt. She was quite a new body, and 'twas no good talking to her ; she could not remember the good old times when the master was a young gentleman, and used to ride about the park on his Shetland pony, and learn to play at cricket, and leap-frog ; and then she dressed herself out smart, with gay ribands and silks, not befitting the housekeeper of Emmerton Hall, who ought to keep to the ancient fashion ; and she would have young idle lads and lasses about the place, which was never known in his days, when every

thing was kept strict and in order ; and, above all, she would never admit him and his pipe into the house, but turned away when she saw it, as if she was too fine a lady to bear what he knew she must have seen a hundred times in her father's farm kitchen. Mrs. Bridget, on her part, quite returned the feeling ; and though she acknowledged that Stephen might be very honest and trust-worthy, and she would not for the world say a word against any one, yet she could not help hinting occasionally that he was growing old, and would be better by his own fire-side than attempting to give directions which he could know nothing about ; and certainly the air with which she was accustomed to turn her back upon him and tell him, whenever he approached with his pipe, not to come near her with that thing in his mouth, would have been quite sufficient to deter a less adventurous person than Stephen from making a second attempt.

The steward's loud exclamation of " Sure, 'tis young madam and little miss !" was heard when he was still at some distance from the carriage, and he turned immediately to the house with the quickest step which his age and gouty foot would allow, that he might be ready to receive them.

" Well, 'tis a strange sight to be sure," he said, as he lifted Amy from the carriage. " I thought Emmerton was never going to see any of you again ; and I have said to myself fifty times within the last month, that for certain young madam couldn't have forgotten me, and my pretty little miss, too, who used to be here so often."

" Ah, but Stephen," said Amy, " poor mamma cannot walk so far as she did, and you know we have only the rector's carriage ; but why don't you come to see us ?"

" The gout, the gout, Miss Amy, that's what

keeps me ; in the old days, I could almost have run there and back in less than the hour, but 'tis all changed—house, and garden, and servants, 'tis all alike—and little it signifies what comes to me. But, madam," he added, turning to Mrs. Herbert, "you'll be for walking in and resting yourself, and Mrs. Bridget will attend upon you ; she wo'n't let me put foot within doors, if she can help it, since I last threw some tobacco on her new gown, which was more loss to me than to her, seeing 'twas all I had, and there was nobody to send to get some more."

"I want to talk to you first, Stephen, for a few minutes," said Mrs. Herbert.

"Ah sure, ma'am," replied Stephen, and 'twill do me good to listen ; for there's no one here to whom one can talk that will understand, seeing they are all new,—all new :—" and the old man's sigh almost amounted to a groan.

"I have had a letter from your master to-day, Stephen," said Mrs. Herbert, fearing to impart too suddenly the death of his young favourite, Edward.

"Have you, ma'am ? and does he say he's well, and the young gentlemen and ladies ? 'Tis the best I can hope to hear now."

"He does not write in good spirits, Stephen ; he has been suffering a great deal lately."

"Sure, ma'am, that's bad news ; but what could any one expect but to be ill, away from one's own place, and all the air that's natural to one."

"Your master has not been ill himself, Stephen ; but one of his children."

"Not master Edward," exclaimed the old man, taking alarm from Mrs. Herbert's countenance. No answer was given for a moment, and Stephen turned to Amy for an explanation. "'Tis not master Edward ; it can't be. O Miss Amy ! just speak."

"I will tell you, Stephen," said Mrs. Herbert, recovering her composure. "It will grieve you very much ; but it is, indeed, poor Edward who was taken ill about a week since, and is now, I trust, gone to a happier world."

The poor old steward's bronzed complexion became of an unnatural sallow hue, and he leaned against the stone porch for support ; but it seemed as if the power of utterance were taken from him.

"Run into the house, and fetch a glass of water, Amy," said Mrs. Herbert ; and Amy, in extreme alarm, flew to obey her mother's order.

In a few moments she returned, followed by Mrs. Bridget, a gaily dressed sharp-visaged person of about forty, who forgot the last grievous offence against her new gown when she heard Amy's frightened exclamation, that dear old Stephen was so ill she thought he must be dying. By this time, however, the colour had returned to his cheek ; and he was able to inquire more calmly the particulars of his young favourite's illness. They were few, but very painful ; for the disease, which was inflammation of the lungs, brought on by a neglected cold, had made most rapid progress, and he had died about two days after he had first been considered seriously ill. "But," said Mrs. Herbert, after she had answered the old man's various questions, "I have not told you yet, Stephen, the only thing which I think is likely now to give you pleasure : my brother talks of returning to Emmerton again to live."

"To live, ma'am !" exclaimed Stephen, starting back ; "but it can't be true. When the carriage drove away from this very place, now ten years ago, I said to myself they were gone for ever ; and so it has proved. 'Tis but a false hope, ma'am.

The master will change his mind when he begins to forget his grief."

"Ah, but Stephen," said Amy, taking his hand affectionately, "it is not a false hope, though; for mamma heard all about it this morning, and she has come now to tell you and Bridget to get the things in order, and they are to be here the week after next. Think of that, Stephen. Won't that make you happy?"

"Poor Master Edward! poor Master Edward!" sighed the old steward; "'twould have been a joyful day, indeed, if he had been coming too. To have looked upon his young face again would have added ten years to my life: but God's will be done!"

"But, Stephen," said Amy, half disappointed, "you are not as much pleased as I thought you would be."

"Ah, little Miss," replied Stephen, as he patted her shoulder, "you are too young to know any thing about sorrow; but I shall be glad, by and by, when I can think that it is true."

"Indeed, indeed, it is true," repeated Amy; "and mamma knows it."

"Amy is right, Stephen," said Mrs. Herbert. "My brother writes me word that Wayland Court is now become so melancholy to him, that he cannot bear to live there, and he intends being at Emmer-ton as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made."

"God be thanked for it!" exclaimed Stephen, clasping his hands together; "and I shall go to my grave in peace, for the old times will be come back again. But no, they wo'n't, though," he added, whilst a bitter recollection flashed upon his mind. "He will never be here again:" and he brushed his hand across his eye to wipe away the tear which glistened in it.

Mrs. Bridget, half annoyed that Mrs. Herbert should have chosen to communicate so important a piece of intelligence to Stephen rather than to herself, now came forward, and in a formal manner, and with a voice which told there was a storm within, said, "I suppose, madam, my master and mistress will communicate with me before they arrive."

"I believe, not, Bridget," replied Mrs. Herbert; "they are in too much distress to think about any thing now; but they have left it all to me, and I was wishing to ask you what would be wanting."

"Nothing, ma'am," said Bridget, drawing up her head rather proudly; "nothing at all. Though I say it that shouldn't say it, the house is just in as perfect order now as it was when my master went away. But I should like to know if my mistress would choose to have the coverings taken off the furniture in the great drawing-room; and there have been a few breakages in the bedrooms; and Stephen tells me there is a pane of glass out of the conservatory; and the fringe of the curtains in the saloon was torn yesterday by the girl who was here cleaning the rooms. I scolded her well for it, and she is coming again to-morrow to mend it."

"Well," said Mrs. Herbert, stopping her, "all these things you can quite well manage yourself, they are but trifles. You had better get all the rooms in order, for I do not at all know which they will choose."

"And the chapel, mamma," said Amy; "won't Bridget have the chapel cleaned? When I was last in it, there was such a heap of dust on the old monument near the door."

Bridget looked annoyed. "The chapel is not my department, Miss Amy; it was given in particular

charge to Stephen's niece by Mrs. Harrington herself; but she is an idle trolloping girl, and always neglects. Stephen," she added, turning to the old man, who appeared quite absorbed in his own thoughts, — "Stephen, Miss Amy declares the chapel is dusty."

The steward started up like a man awakened from a dream; and catching only the meaning of the last word of the sentence, exclaimed — "Dusty! and whose fault is that, pray?"

"Whose, but that fine lady's, your niece?" said Bridget, giving way to an irritation of temper which she did not dare to exhibit to Mrs. Herbert, and delighted at having something to find fault with. "She is so busy all day with her flounces and her furbelows, that she has no time to think of her work."

Stephen, now fully alive to every thing, looked steadily at Mrs. Bridget as she said this; and then scanning her from head to foot with a half contemptuous smile, muttered — "Not so very different from other people," and walked away, though it was only a few paces, for his angry feelings were very soon subdued.

"I should like to go over the house, Bridget," said Mrs. Herbert; "and after that, perhaps, you will get us some tea; for the evening is so fine we need not return home till late."

"Dear mamma," said Amy, "may we have it in your own room? I should so enjoy it! you know I like it better than any in the whole house."

Mrs. Herbert made no objection; for although there were many melancholy ideas connected with this room, yet she felt, like Amy, that to her it had more charms than any other.

It was in nearly the oldest part of the house, and had been occupied by herself and her favourite

sister from the time when she was about fifteen, and was considered old enough to leave the school-room, and yet too young to go into society. Her mother had fitted it up for them with every thing that could be required for their enjoyment; and here they had been accustomed to spend their mornings together free from interruption, for it was so far removed from the more modern buildings, that even the sounds of the visitors' carriages could scarcely reach them. The deep oriel window looked out on the quietest and loveliest part of the pleasure-ground; and a private door opening upon it, afforded them a free and unobserved access to the garden; and many were the hours which Mrs. Herbert had spent with her sister Edith, reading together under the shade of the large elm trees, with not a thought or wish beyond the enjoyment of the present moment.

The room was now deserted. The piano was still in its accustomed place, but its rich full tone had become wiry and harsh by time. The table was still standing by the window, but its clear polish had a cold repulsive appearance. There were no books, no work, no flowers. The chairs were ranged in regular order against the empty bookshelves; the gay colours of the curtains and ottomans were faded; and, instead of the bright smile and the merry laugh which had once greeted Mrs. Herbert, there was nothing now to tell of the companion of her childhood but the picture which hung over the fire-place.

But Mrs. Herbert did not complain: she had early left a home of happiness, for one which was even more delightful to her; and her sister who had married likewise, was still in the possession of health and prosperity. She had, therefore, much cause for thankfulness; and yet she never entered

this room, and recollected the pleasures of her youth, without a pang, which became the more painful when her husband's long-continued absence gave her so great a cause of anxiety.

Amy's associations with what had generally been called the oriel room were of a more cheerful character. She had never known it different from what it now was; and to her it only brought the remembrance of many happy hours, spent there with her mother, in their occasional visits to Emmerton, and particularly of various incidents in Mrs. Herbert's early life, which were almost sure to be recalled by some object or circumstance connected with it. With a secret hope that something of this kind would complete the pleasures of the day, she now followed her mother through the silent deserted chambers, while directions were given for every thing which might render them more comfortable; but at last, wearied with listening, she left Mrs. Herbert's side, and wandered by herself into the pleasure-ground, till she became so tired that she was glad to find her way back to the oriel room, where Mrs. Bridget, whose great favourite she was (and it was the only point on which Bridget and Stephen agreed), had prepared the tea, and spread the table with fresh fruit and cakes. This was not, to Amy, at all an unpleasing sight; and when Mrs. Herbert came in she felt quite inclined to begin her evening meal; but they had scarcely seated themselves when Amy started back, exclaiming, "O mamma! pray look there. Did you ever see such a wretched little object?"

Mrs. Herbert turned to the window, and saw a miserable girl, with a pale haggard countenance and covered with rags, holding out her hand and begging for charity.

"Dear mamma! do give her something," said Amy; "she looks so dreadfully hungry."

"I will ask her a few questions first," replied Mrs. Herbert, "and find out where she comes from, and then we shall know what is best to be done for her. I suppose she found her way into the pleasure-ground through the back lane and the kitchen-garden."

Mrs. Herbert opened the window; and, beckoning to the girl to approach, made several inquiries as to her parents, her home, and her present necessities. She seemed sadly frightened; but answered without hesitation, that her father, who was a common labourer, had lately died, leaving a wife and six children, of whom she was the eldest. It was her mother's wish to return to her parish, thinking she should be better provided for there than amongst strangers. She had set out on the journey; but, being taken very ill, she had been obliged to stop at a village about a mile and a half distant, where she had spent all her money, and now, being totally destitute, she had sent her child to beg for some assistance.

"What will you do for her, mamma?" whispered Amy.

"I must know a little more about her before I decide," replied Mrs. Herbert. "Is there no one in the village," she added, speaking to the girl, "who has helped your mother?"

"The clergyman's lady has been very good to us, ma'am," was the reply; "but the people of the house want mother to pay for the lodging, and she has no money."

"It is a sad case, if it be true," said Mrs. Herbert; "but I will make some inquiries to-morrow: and now you shall take home something for your supper; and I will write to the lady who has been so kind

to you; and, if you have spoken the truth, she will give your mother something for me."

The girl curtsied and seemed pleased and grateful; and Amy, whilst her mother was writing a note, begged that she might take her round to Bridget's room, and give her her supper before she returned home: and when the girl had left the house with some bread and a bone of meat, Amy went back to her own comfortable meal with a much higher sense of the greatness of her daily blessings than she had had a quarter of an hour before.

The idea, however, of so much poverty and suffering in some degree diminished her enjoyment, and she sat for a while thoughtful and silent. At length, turning suddenly to Mrs. Herbert, she exclaimed,

"Mamma, it is very strange that some people are so poor and others so rich.

"It does seem so at first," replied Mrs. Herbert; "and we can only account for it by saying, that it is the will of God; that He alone knows what is good for us all, and therefore He ordains different things for different people; and though we consider poverty an evil, yet it is often a very great good, and makes people think of Him and love Him, when they would otherwise forget Him."

"But there is such a great, great difference in people," said Amy; "that poor woman has not a farthing, and my uncle Harrington has thousands a-year, you have told me."

"So he has," replied Mrs. Herbert; "and yet, in a few years, they may both, perhaps, be equally rich."

"O mamma! how can that be possible!" exclaimed Amy.

"It may be true, to a certain extent, at this very moment, my dear. You know what is meant by being an heir — having a right to certain property

or money, which is to be received at some future period. Now, it is more than probable that your uncle with all his riches, and that poor woman in the midst of her sufferings, have both the same expectations for the future."

"Not on earth, mamma," observed Amy.

"No, my love," replied Mrs. Herbert; "but a person is not the less an heir because he will not receive his inheritance until he is admitted to heaven. I remember that I first learned to think upon this subject when I was about two years younger than you are now."

"Do tell me how, mamma!" exclaimed Amy, her eyes sparkling with delight: "it must be one of your stories about the time when you were a little girl."

"It is not quite a story, Amy, and, at any rate, it is rather a grave one; so, perhaps, we had better wait till you are quite in the humour."

"Oh! but I am quite in the humour always, mamma; and I think I like grave stories best. Will it be a long one?"

"No," replied Mrs. Herbert; "neither long nor amusing: and yet, perhaps, it may interest you, as it may help to explain a subject on which you have often heard me speak, and which it is very necessary you should understand and think about."

"The time I am going to tell you of was, as I mentioned just now, when I was about ten years old and your uncle Harrington one-and-twenty. Persons at that age are, you know, considered capable of taking care of their property; and the day of their attaining it is very often marked by great rejoicings, in the case of those who have the expectation of a large inheritance. This was your uncle's situation, and great preparations were made for several weeks before, that the event might be

properly celebrated. Invitations were sent to all our friends, who were then very numerous, and many came from a distance to spend some days with us. A dinner was to be given to the tenants and the school children; there were to be fireworks let off from the terrace in the evening, and a band of music was engaged for the occasion;—and all this was to do honour to my brother. You may imagine how much I was interested in it, and how very delightful I thought it must be to be in his place. I do not think I ever longed for anything in my whole life so much as I did for the arrival of this day. I could talk of nothing else,—I could think of nothing else; and I am afraid I gave my governess, Miss Harwood, very much trouble for a whole week, I was so inattentive to my lessons. At length it came—the long-wished-for twentieth of June; and certainly it was as lovely a day as I could possibly have desired. I remember waking very early, and jumping out of my bed to look at the weather. The sky was of a deep rich blue with only a faint mist over the distance, foretelling the heat of the noonday. From my window I could see far over the country, and every thing that I could distinctly view was my father's property. I called to my sister Edith, and made her come to the window, to enjoy the perfect beauty of the morning; and I can well recollect saying to her, with a half-envious sigh, 'Should you not like to be Charles, and to think that all this was to be your own?' Your aunt, Amy, was of a very sweet contented disposition, and she checked me for the wish, and said that she was thankful for her brother's blessings, but she could hardly desire them for herself,—she was afraid she should not make a good use of them. We stood for some time together; but said very little, for there was such a perfect stillness

reigning around that it almost seemed as if it would be wrong to break it. Presently, however, we heard the sound of distant music; it came nearer and nearer, and we soon recognised the sweet voices of the village children, who had been sent to pay this first mark of respect to their young master.

"I cannot describe how beautiful it sounded to me, though perhaps it was only because I was in a state of such excitement, and so inclined to find delight in every thing; but I know that I listened to it with breathless attention, and when I turned to look at Edith, there was a tear in her eye, and I do not think that she, though so much calmer in disposition, has ever forgotten, any more than myself, the tones of that simple hymn."

"But, mamma," interrupted Amy, "the children never sing so beautifully now?"

"I do not mean, my dear," replied Mrs. Herbert, "that the music was really so very much better than what I had usually heard, though I dare say they had had a great deal of pains taken with them. But you will find as you grow older, that many things which are in themselves common, will appear delightful to you if you are inclined to be particularly happy; and so it was with me on that morning. Edith and myself stayed so long at the window, even after the children's singing was over, that we were only just dressed by the time the bell rang for morning prayers; and when we entered the chapel, it was quite full. All the servants of the family, with those of our numerous guests and a few of my father's tenants, were ranged on the long oaken benches in the aisle; the seats for the gentlemen were occupied by my father, my brother, and their friends; and the ladies' gallery, in which we were, was also crowded. I felt quite frightened when I

went in, for many of those present were strangers to me, having arrived late the night before ; but I took my place between Edith and Miss Harwood, and the service began. It was read by my brother's tutor, a clergyman who lived in the family ; and when it was over, the party assembled in the breakfast room, but we were considered too young to join it, and we came back to what was then the school-room — the very room in which we now are, Amy — to be with Miss Harwood and the younger children till it should be time for us to wait upon the poor people who were to have a dinner given them on the lawn, in front of the house. All that I could think of was the grandeur of my brother's situation, and the pleasure of having so many persons assembled to do honour to oneself. I could not fix my attention to anything, but could only count the hours till two o'clock, and run occasionally to the top of the great staircase to look at what was going on below, for preparations were making on a large scale for the evening's entertainment ; servants were constantly passing and repassing, and I heard my brother's name repeated by almost every one. At length Edith and I were told to go into the servants' hall, where the school children were to meet, and to place them in order, that they might walk regularly, two and two, to the ground where the dinner was laid. This was to me most welcome news ; for I was tired of being nearly the only useless person in the midst of so much bustle, and we spent at least a quarter of an hour endeavouring to make them understand which were to go together and how they were to behave, and distributing some little coloured banners which we had amused ourselves with preparing for the occasion ; and when the great bell sounded, Edith and myself walked before them to the ground. My father and his guests were

assembled on the terrace, and my brother stood by my father's side, exactly in the centre. The children and their parents, and the rest of the tenants, were ranged at their several tables; and then, when the steward had called for silence, they all rose, and my father spoke to them, in a voice so clear that I think it must have been heard by every one. He told them of the gratification it was to him to see them all before him, and of the certainty he felt of their good-will towards him, with many more expressions of the same kind; and then, taking my brother by the hand, he led him forward to the edge of the terrace, and presented him to them, as his heir, and their future master, saying that he trusted he would always prove himself their true friend; and that when he should be laid in his grave, my brother might receive from them, and from their children, the same marks of sincere attachment which they had always shown to himself.

"A general burst of applause followed this speech of my father's, and the words 'Long live the young master,' were heard from every lip — even the children joined in the cry; and when the excitement had a little subsided, my brother also spoke. He was extremely frightened, and I could not hear all that he said; but I was told afterwards that he thanked them for their reception of him, and added that he hoped it would be very long before he should be called on to act as their master; but that, when that time should arrive, it would be his one earnest endeavour to follow his father's footsteps. As he concluded another loud cheer was given by the tenants, and just as it was dying away I heard a voice behind me say, in a deep suppressed tone, 'May God in heaven bless him! and may he one day be the possessor of a far richer inheritance!' I was quite startled at the solemnity with which the

words were spoken, and I did not at the moment understand their meaning. They seemed to be quite involuntary, and were certainly not intended to be overheard; and I turned quickly to see who was near. I was standing between the two tables, and on my right hand was a young man whose face I did not at all recollect. He appeared about my brother's age; but instead of Charles's healthy complexion and strong limbs, he looked completely worn by disease. There was not the slightest tinge of colour in his cheeks; his eyes were deep sunk in his head, and even his lips were of an ashy paleness, and the hand by which he supported himself, as he leant rather than stood against the table, was more like that of a skeleton than of a living being; his clothes were neat and clean, but showed marks of great poverty; and, in fact, I had seldom seen such indications of extreme sickness and want."

"Poor man!" exclaimed Amy, "was he really unhappy, mamma?"

"No, my love," replied Mrs. Herbert. "I was just going to tell you, that, notwithstanding all these symptoms of suffering, he looked perfectly contented, and there was even a smile upon his face. I watched him as he seated himself after the speeches were ended, and saw that he was quite exhausted: he eat little or nothing; and before the dinner was over, he was obliged to leave the ground, assisted by an elderly woman, whom I knew very well and who was in very distressed circumstances. I could not help thinking, as he slowly walked away, of the vast difference there was between him and my brother in every thing; and the same question arose in my mind which you asked me just now, Amy, 'Why God should make some people rich and others poor?' but there was no one near me then to answer it. The remainder of the afternoon was spent by us in

setting the village children to play and resting ourselves in the school-room. And when the heat of the day began to lessen, and we knew that the company were at dinner, Miss Harwood proposed that we should go to the top of the hill at the side of the house, which was our favourite walk, where we should probably see a magnificent sunset, and return in time to be dressed for the drawing-room.

"I was so restless, that it was a great relief to have some occupation found for me, and I enjoyed the thought of the cool evening air after the fatigue and sultriness of the morning ; and I determined also that I would, if I could manage it, get Miss Harwood alone, and ask her to explain what had so puzzled me, and find out from her who the poor man was who had left the table, for his face seemed constantly before me, with its expression of great suffering and yet of quiet happiness. Edith and I set out together ; but I soon left her with the others, searching for wild flowers, and joined Miss Harwood. We easily outstripped them, and reached the top of the hill long before they had half filled their baskets. Miss Harwood always noticed any change in us, and she asked me why I was so fond of getting away from the rest, and whether I should not be much happier with them than with her. I had no concealment from her any more than you have from me, Amy, and I told her directly what I wanted to ask her, and how I had wondered to see that poor man, apparently so destitute, when my brother had every thing that the world could give him. She gave me very much the same answer that I have given you, that it was the will of God, and that he knew what was good for us, and often sent us sufferings to teach us to think of him ; and then she added that she knew the poor man well, and had been present when he and my brother had both been

1

declared heirs of a far richer inheritance than any that my father had to bestow. I felt surprised ; and the exclamation I had heard in the morning, and which before I had scarcely thought of, flashed upon my memory. I supposed Miss Harwood's words must have some allusion to it, though I could not understand how ; and I eagerly asked why the poor man did not obtain any benefit from his inheritance. He does obtain a great benefit from it at this moment replied Miss Harwood, almost sadly ; and I do not doubt that in a very short time he will be admitted to possess at least a portion of it. You may imagine how desirous I was of having this mystery explained ; but when I looked at Miss Harwood I saw that she was thinking of something very serious, and a sudden notion of her meaning came into my mind. You mean an inheritance in heaven, I said, half doubting whether I might not be wrong. A smile of pleasure passed across Miss Harwood's face as she answered, ' Yes, Ellen, you are quite right ; and I will tell you what I meant when I said that he was made an heir of heaven. It is now many years ago, I was staying at Emmerton, soon after your brother's birth, and long before I thought of ever being a governess. On the day on which he was baptized, I went with your father and several of his friends to the village church. I stood at the font with the godfathers and his godmother (who, you know, are called sponsors), and I heard the clergyman ask them some very solemn questions, which they were required to answer in your brother's name. He then took him in his arms, sprinkled him with water, and marked on his forehead the sign of the cross, and giving him back to his nurse, he declared him to be one of that society or set of persons who form what is called the church, and to whom God has promised his kingdom. From that

moment, continued Miss Harwood, your brother was made a Christian and an heir of glory, such as we cannot imagine; the sins of his original evil nature were forgiven him, and a new spirit was implanted in him: and when I looked at him, as he lay in his nurse's arms, I could not help thinking that it would be happier for him if it were to please God to take him at once to himself, before he could by any sin of his own forfeit his innocence, and risk the loss of his eternal inheritance. But, she added, he was not the only one who on that day received the promise of the kingdom of heaven. Besides our own party, there stood by the font four of our poor neighbours, some, indeed, of the poorest in the parish. One of them held a sickly-looking infant, wrapped in a coarse kind of cloak; and when Charles had been baptized, this child was given to the clergyman. The same questions were asked, the same water was sprinkled upon him, the same sign was marked on his forehead, and then he also was restored to his parents, a Christian, and an heir of everlasting happiness. Notwithstanding the vast difference in their outward circumstances, there was none in the eye of God: both had received infinite blessings, both were engaged to keep the most solemn promises.

“‘Your brother, Ellen,’ continued Miss Harwood, ‘has grown up in the midst of every earthly luxury, and has to-day been declared heir to a splendid property: the other child was bred in poverty, and accustomed to the severest privations. He was early obliged to leave his home, and work for his livelihood amongst strangers; and now he has returned to his mother, who is a widow, and nearly destitute, completely broken in health, and with no prospect before him but that of a speedy death. Which do you think is the more to be envied?’

"I was silent, for I knew that I would far rather be my brother, the possessor of health and riches, than a poor man in need of every thing. Do you think I was right, Amy?"

"If the poor man went to heaven, mamma," said Amy, "I suppose he would have every thing there that he could desire."

"Yes, my love," replied Mrs. Herbert, "he would indeed; and yet, though I knew this then as you do now, I could not easily forget all the respect that I had seen shown to my brother that morning, and I did not like to say any thing that was not true."

"Miss Harwood waited for a few moments, and then said, 'Look, Ellen, at the park, and the woods beneath us, and the pretty little village beyond — you know it is all your father's — is it not very lovely?'

"'Yes!' I replied, surprised at the question."

"'But now look farther,' said Miss Harwood; 'do you not see what a vast extent of country there is on the other side, stretching away till it reaches the sea? The owner of all that property would be a much greater person than even your father.'

"'Yes, indeed he would,' I said, as I turned in the direction to which she pointed."

"'But now, Ellen, look once more,' said Miss Harwood, 'over the sea into the sky — look at that mass of brilliant purple and golden clouds, behind which the sun is now sinking; do you not see, far away to the right, a pale bright star? — it is the only one which has yet appeared; but in a short time the whole firmament will be studded with millions and millions like it. Each of those stars is, as you well know, a world, and we may believe infinitely more perfect than ours. If it be a great thing to be the child of one who owns so beautiful an estate as your father, must it not be a far greater

to be the child of him who not merely owns, but who created, those glorious worlds?"

" 'But my brother,' I said, 'was made the child of God as well as that poor man.'

" 'Yes,' replied Miss Harwood; 'and we may hope that when it shall be the will of God that he should die, he also may inherit the blessing which has been promised him, but his trial is yet to come: he may be tempted to do wrong, and forget God, and he may, therefore, lose it; but that poor man's trial will, in all probability, soon be over. I know that he has endeavoured to keep the vow made for him at his baptism, and trusts only to the merits of his Saviour for salvation, and therefore I have but little fear for him; but I do feel for your brother, because I know he is in the midst of great temptations.'

"These words sounded very strangely to me,—it seemed as if Miss Harwood were pitying Charles, instead of envying him, as I did; and I was going to ask her some more questions, when Edith and my other sisters came running towards us, telling us that they had gathered a most beautiful nosegay, and wished now to return home. They began laughing at me for running away from them; but they could not make me join in their merriment, for I could only think of all that Miss Harwood had been saying; and even when we reached the house and were dressed for the evening, I still remembered it.

"The large saloon was lighted up when we entered, and there were a great many people assembled, all gaily dressed, and walking up and down whilst the band was playing. My brother was noticed by every one, and was evidently considered the chief person, and I felt that I should have been happy to be him; but then Miss Harwood's words recurred to my mind, and I became thoughtful, for I knew that,

although he might be the heir of earthly grandeur, yet that, if he were to do wrong, and lose the promise of heaven, he must be miserable. We were not allowed to stay very long, Amy, and therefore I cannot give you a great description of the ball; I only remember how very tired I was when I went to bed, and that my last thoughts were of my conversation with Miss Harwood, and of my brother and the poor man."

"Is that all, mamma?" said Amy.

"Yes, my dear," replied Mrs. Herbert, "you know I told you it was not a very interesting story."

"I did not mean that, mamma," said Amy, "for I have liked it very much; but I was thinking of the poor man. Did you never see him again?"

"Only once," replied Mrs. Herbert; "for he was too ill, after that day, to leave his home. It was one afternoon when I had been with Miss Harwood into the village; and, as we were returning, we passed his cottage door: he was seated at it, supported by pillows, and looking even worse than on the day of the fête. Miss Harwood had a basket of fruit for him, and she stopped and talked to him for some little time. I cannot tell you all that passed, Amy; for I did not entirely understand it myself, and some of it was too solemn to be repeated again: but I well remember the peaceful expression of the poor man's countenance, and that he said he would not exchange his prospect of happiness for any thing earth could give; he also mentioned my brother, and seemed to feel a great interest for him. But there was nothing like envy at what appeared to me so much more desirable a lot: he looked, and indeed he was, perfectly contented; and a few days after I was told by Miss Harwood that he was dead."

"And what became of his mother?" asked Amy.

"She is living still in the village, and in the same cottage; for although it is almost a hovel, she cannot afford anything more comfortable: and I hardly think she would change it if she could; for she has often said to me, that it was there her husband and her child died, and she should never love any place so well. But you have frequently seen her, my dear; do you not remember the little thatched cottage next the blacksmith's shop, and the old woman we often notice spinning at the door?"

"Oh! yes," said Amy, "old widow Watson; but she is very cheerful."

"She has the same cause for cheerfulness that her son had," replied Mrs. Herbert. "But now, Amy, do you understand from my story why I said that the mother of the poor little ragged girl we saw just now, has probably as great a prospect of future happiness as your uncle Harrington?"

"Yes, mamma, if she has been baptised; but we are not sure of that."

"We may hope that she has been," replied her mother; "but that which I am most desirous you should think of, is, not so much the case of that poor child as your own. You can have no doubt of your baptism, and you may therefore feel quite certain of having had a promise made to you; and when you grow older, and begin to know what the troubles of life really are, you will be able to appreciate the blessing of having something to hope for and expect beyond the pleasures of the world."

"Every body who is grown up talks of having had a great deal of sorrow, mamma," said Amy; "and so I suppose it is true: and sometimes I feel quite frightened, and wish I could be always young; for I am very happy now, and when my cousins come, I do not think I shall ever want anything more."

Mrs. Herbert looked rather grave as she an-

swered, — "I am afraid, my dear, that your cousins' arrival may make a great change in many of your ideas. They have been brought up very differently from you, and you will see them dressed in fine clothes, and with servants to wait on them, and carriages to drive about in; and then, perhaps, you will become envious and discontented."

"O mamma!" exclaimed Amy, "how can you think so, when I shall have you with me?"

"I wish I could teach you, my love, how much better it is to be the child of God than to be my child," replied Mrs. Herbert. "I should have no fears for you then; for you would not care for the grandeur and riches which you will see your cousins possess, and you would always be happy whether I were with you or not."

"Mamma," said Amy, "you have often talked lately of my living without you; but it makes me so very miserable to think of it, I wish you would not mention it."

"You must not give way to this kind of feeling, my dear child," answered her mother; "for we must bear whatever God thinks fit to appoint. But I cannot talk any more now: you shall go into the garden till the carriage is ready, and leave me alone, for I am sadly tired."

"I do not like to leave you," said Amy, "you look so pale and ill; and you never used to do so. Oh, how I wish ——" but here she stopped, fearing lest the mention of her father's name might increase her mother's grief.

"You need not be afraid," replied Mrs. Herbert, with a half smile, though she well knew what was uppermost in her child's mind; "all that I require is rest and quiet."

Amy said no more, but placed a glass of water by her mother's side, and left the room.

When she was gone, Mrs. Herbert closed her

eyes, and seemed as if endeavouring to sleep ; but the working of her forehead and the pressure of her lips showed that there was no repose of the mind. Solitude only brought before her more clearly the image of her husband in a distant land, — perhaps ill and unhappy, it might be dying : but it was necessary for her own health and for Amy's happiness that she should struggle against these sad forebodings ; and although a few tears at first rolled slowly down her cheek, and she felt that it was almost impossible to prevent herself from giving way to her grief, she did at length succeed in turning her mind to the consideration of the watchful providence and mercy of God ; and by the time Amy returned with the announcement that the carriage was ready, she had quite regained her tranquillity.

Stephen was at the door as they drove off, and bade them good bye with a happier look than was his wont ; though, when Amy asked him if he were not delighted at the thought of all the carriages and horses he should soon see, he scarcely smiled as he answered, — “ Ah ! yes, Miss Amy, 'twill be very fine ; but there will be no one now to ride the Shetland pony in the park ; ” and he turned his head, and walked quickly away. Mrs. Bridget's civilities, now that she knew how much depended on Mrs. Herbert's good opinion, were greater than usual ; and many were the hopes she expressed that every thing had been satisfactory in the house, and that dear little Miss Amy had liked the cake and strawberries. But Mrs. Herbert was too tired to listen long to her speeches, and expressed her approbation in few words ; and Amy, who liked Stephen a great deal better than Bridget, declared that it was all quite delicious, and then ran after the old steward to say good-by once more.

CHAP. III.

"THERE are only six days now, mamma," said Amy, as she sat at work by her mother's side, about a week after their visit to Emmerton; "only six days, and then my cousins will be come; but they seem dreadfully long; and I have been thinking, too, that perhaps I shall not be liked; and if so, you know all my pleasure will be at an end."

"You had better not think any thing about that, my dear," answered Mrs. Herbert; "it is nearly the certain way of preventing yourself from being agreeable. If you are good-natured and sweet-tempered, there is very little doubt of your being liked; but if you make any great efforts to please, you will probably be led into saying and doing things that are not quite natural, and you will at once become disagreeable; besides, you may be tempted to act wrongly in order to suit your cousins' inclinations. You know, Amy, we ought to try not to be liked, but to be good."

"But will you just tell me every thing about my cousins, mamma, that I may know what to expect? There will be Dora, and Margaret, and Frank, and Rose; four of them. Now, what will Dora be like?"

"I really can tell you very little," replied Mrs. Herbert; "it is a long time since I have seen any of them, and you have heard almost as much as I have. Dora, I believe, has been brought forward a good deal, and probably therefore considers herself older than she really is; she must be more than four-

teen, and I should think would not be so much your companion as Margaret, who is a year younger. Frank you will not see a great deal of, as he is at school the chief part of the year; though perhaps now the difference of his position in the family may make some change in his father's plans for him. Little Rose, who is not quite six, is the pet of the whole house, and especially doated upon by her mother; and this is nearly all the information I can give you."

"And will the young lady I have so often heard you speak of come with them, or will my aunt teach them as you do me?"

"She will come with them, I have no doubt," replied Mrs. Herbert; "for although your aunt objects to a regular governess, and has educated your cousins almost entirely herself; yet, lately, Miss Morton has assisted her very much in their music and drawing."

"Miss Morton is the daughter of a clergyman who lived very near Wayland, is she not, mamma?" said Amy.

"Yes," answered her mother. "He died suddenly, and his wife only survived him about a month, and this poor girl was left quite unprovided for. Some of her relations interested themselves for her, and placed her at a very excellent school, where she had great advantages, and having a superior talent for music and drawing she made very rapid progress. When she was nearly nineteen, she entered your uncle's family, and has lived with them now, for two years."

"Will she be with them always?" asked Amy, "or will she have separate rooms, as I have heard most governesses have?"

"I believe she has been accustomed to have a sitting-room to herself," said Mrs. Herbert; "or,

at least, the schoolroom has been considered hers, and she seldom joins the rest of the party."

"Poor thing!" said Amy; "without any father or mother, it must be very sad in the long winter evenings."

Mrs. Herbert thought the same, but she did not wish to express her opinion; and Amy, having finished her work, was told to go and prepare for a walk, her mother being glad to find an excuse for breaking off the conversation, and so avoiding any further questions.

The arrival of her brother's family was, indeed, a subject of anxious consideration for Mrs. Herbert. It must have a great influence on Amy's mind, either for good or evil; and there was much reason to fear that the evil would preponderate. Mr. Harrington was a man of high honour and extreme benevolence; but he was constitutionally indolent, and had allowed his wife to gain so much influence over him, that the management of every thing was chiefly in her hands. It certainly might have been entrusted to worse, for Mrs. Harrington had good judgment, superior sense in all worldly affairs, and a never-failing activity. Her establishment was the best ordered, her dinners were the best dressed, her farm and dairy were the best supplied of any in the county—all was in a style of first-rate elegance, without any pretension or extravagance; but when she attempted to apply her sense and her activity to the management of her children, she failed essentially, for the one thing was wanting—she had no real principle of religion.

She had, it is true, taken care that they should be taught their catechism, almost as soon as they could speak; but she had never endeavoured to explain to them its meaning; they had been accustomed to repeat a hasty prayer every morning and

evening, but they had never learned how solemn a duty they were performing ; and every Sunday they had been in the habit of reading a chapter in the Bible, but it was hurried through without the smallest thought, partly as a task, and partly as a means of passing away the time. If it had not been for this great deficiency, Mrs. Harrington would have been well calculated for the task of education ; caring, however, only for accomplishments which might make a show in the world, she considered the cultivation of her children's minds a matter of secondary importance ; and although she was desirous they should be clever and well-read, that they might appear to advantage in society, she thought very little of the effect their studies might have upon their general character.

From these circumstances, as might easily be supposed, Dora and Margaret grew up with all their natural evil inclinations unchecked, and the good unimproved. Dora's temper, originally haughty, had become year by year more overbearing, as she found that from her father's rank and fortune, and from being herself the eldest daughter of the family, she could exact attention, not only from her brothers and sisters, but from most of her playmates, and all the servants and dependants ; and if occasionally she excited her mother's displeasure, when a music lesson had been particularly bad, or a drawing very carelessly executed, her talents easily enabled her to regain that place in Mrs. Harrington's affection, which depended so much upon external superiority. And yet, under good guidance, Dora Harrington might have become a very admirable person ; her disposition was generous and candid, and her feelings were warm and easily excited ; but her pride and self-will had hitherto marred every better quality.

Margaret was very different : she was more inclined to be gentle and yielding, but this rather from indolence than amiability ; and her vanity and selfishness rendered her, perhaps, even less agreeable than her sister, when she became more intimately known. There was, indeed, one peculiarity about her, which, on a first acquaintance, was very winning — a great desire of gaining the love of others, and for this purpose she would use the most affectionate expressions, and profess the greatest interest in their happiness ; but her young companions soon found that she was seldom willing to make the sacrifice of her own inclinations to theirs ; and persons who were older and could see deeper into her character, discovered that her love of affection differed but little from her love of admiration, as she only valued it because it gained her, attention ; and the same vanity which made her delight in the praises of her delicate complexion and fair hair, and bright blue eyes, made her also take pleasure in knowing that she was an object of interest and regard to those around her.

Such were probably to be Amy's companions for the next few years of her life, Rose being too young to be considered of the number ; and it was well for Mrs. Herbert's happiness that she was little aware of their dispositions. Yet she had some fears as to the principle on which her nieces had been educated ; and she could not but be thankful that she should, as she hoped, be at hand for at least some time to come, to watch the effect of the intimacy upon Amy's mind, and to warn her against any evil which might result from it ; as she felt that, in the event of her own death and her husband's prolonged absence, it would be upon her brother's family alone that she could depend for

friendship and protection to her almost orphan child.

Amy herself, with all the thoughtlessness of her age, looked forward to nothing but enjoyment ; and when the first rays of the sun shone through her window, on the morning of the day that was to witness her meeting with her cousins, and awakened her from her quiet sleep and her peaceful dreams, it was only to give her the expectation of a yet brighter reality. For the next hour she lay awake, imagining the grandeur of Emmerton Hall in its best furniture, the delight of driving in her uncle's carriage, and the probability that she might have beautiful presents made her — new books, or a watch, or a pony, or, what would be still better, a pony-chaise for her mamma, now that she was unable to walk far. She even went on to count up the books she should wish for, and to settle the colour of the pony, not doubting that her uncle would be willing to give her every thing ; for she had always been told he was very kind, and a person who could live at Emmerton, she was sure, must be able to purchase whatever he desired.

"O mamma! I am so happy!" was her first exclamation, as she seated herself at the breakfast-table. "Do see what a beautiful day it is ; and I have been awake so long this morning, thinking over what we shall do in the afternoon. I am sure you must be happy too."

"Happy to see you so, my love," said Mrs. Herbert, as she kissed her.

"But why not happy in yourself, mamma ; are you ill?" and she looked at Mrs. Herbert anxiously ; then suddenly becoming grave, she said, — "Dear mamma, it was very wrong in me, but I did not think about poor Edward."

"It was very natural, my dear, and you need

not be distressed because you cannot feel for him as I do, who knew him when he was a healthy merry child, the delight of every one."

"Then there is no harm in being happy?" said Amy; "but I will try to be so to myself, though I should like you to smile too: but perhaps you will when you see them quite settled at Emmerton."

"I hope every one will be reconciled to the loss in time," replied Mrs. Herbert; "and perhaps, Amy, it will be a greater pleasure to me, by and by, to know that your uncle is so near than it will be to you."

"O mamma! how can that be? you know you are so much older; and you always tell me that grown-up people do not enjoy things so much as children."

"But supposing, my dear, that your cousins being at Emmerton should make you envious and discontented with your own home, you would not be happy then?"

For a few moments Amy did not speak; a grave expression came over her face; and allowing her breakfast to remain untouched, she sat apparently deep in thought. At last she said,—"Mamma, people must be very unhappy when they are envious."

"Yes, indeed, they must," replied Mrs. Herbert; "for they are always longing for things which God has not chosen to give them, and are unthankful for those which they possess; besides, they often dislike the persons whom they fancy more blessed than themselves."

"And should you love me, mamma, if I were envious?" continued Amy, looking intently at her mother as she spoke."

"It would be a dreadful thing indeed, my love,

which would prevent me from loving you ; but I should be very, very sorry to see you so."

Again Amy was silent, and began eating her breakfast hastily ; but it seemed an effort, and Mrs. Herbert presently saw that the tears were fast rolling down her cheeks.

"Amy, my dear child, what is the matter?" she exclaimed.

Amy tried to answer, but her voice failed her ; and rising from her seat, she hid her face on her mother's neck, and then said in a low tone, — "Mamma, I know I have been envious."

"If you have, my dear, you are, I am sure, very sorry for it now ; and you must not vex yourself too much when you discover you have a fault, since you know that, if you pray to God, He will forgive you, and help you to overcome it."

"But, mamma, said Amy, I did not think it was envy till just now. It was the other evening when we came back from Emmerton, and I was fancying how beautiful the house would be when it was all furnished, and how I should like to live there ; and then when we got near home, I did not like the cottage as much as I used to do, it appeared so small ; and I began to think I should be happier if I were one of my cousins, and had a carriage, and horses and servants. But O mamma ! it was very wicked" — and here Amy's tears again fell fast — "for I forgot that I had you."

"The feeling was very natural," said Mrs Herbert, "though I will not say it was right. I have often been afraid lest seeing your nearest relations so much richer than yourself, might make you uncomfortable ; but you know I told you before, that God sends to each of us some particular trial or temptation, to prove whether we will love and serve him, or give way to our own evil inclinations ;

and this will probably be yours, through the greater part of your life. But when the feeling of envy arises in your heart, will you, my darling Amy, pray to God to help you, and teach you to remember, that at your baptism you received the promise of infinitely greater happiness and glory than any which this world can give. And now you must finish your breakfast, or you will make yourself quite ill and unfit for the day's pleasure; and, after our reading and your morning lessons, we will have a very early dinner, so that we may have time to call at Colworth parsonage, before we go to Emmerton. Mrs. Saville has sent me word, that the story the poor girl told us the other evening is quite true, and I should like to inquire how her mother is.

Amy reseated herself at the breakfast table; but she could not easily recover her spirits, and, during the whole morning, there was a grave tone in her voice, and a slight melancholy in her countenance, which only disappeared when Mr. Walton's carriage came to the door at two o'clock, and she found herself actually on the road to Emmerton, to receive her cousins. The increased distance by Colworth was about two miles, and, at another time, it would have added to her enjoyment to go by a new road; but every moment's unnecessary delay now made her feel impatient, and she was only quieted by her mamma's reminding her that her uncle could not possibly arrive before half-past four or five o'clock, and therefore it would be a pleasant way of spending the intervening time. "Besides," said Mrs. Herbert, "we must not forget others, Amy, because we are happy ourselves; perhaps we may be of use to the poor woman." Amy sighed, and wished she could be like her mother, and never forget what was right, and the consciousness of one fault brought

back the remembrance of another, and with it the morning's conversation ; and this again reminded her of their last evening at Emmerton, and her mamma's story, till her mind became so occupied that she forgot the novelty of the road, and her impatience to be at the end of her journey ; and when the carriage stopped at the gate at Colworth, she was thinking of what Mrs. Herbert had said about her uncle Harrington and the poor woman having the same prospect for the future, and wondering whether they either of them thought of it as her mamma seemed to do.

Mrs. Saville was almost a stranger to Amy ; but her kind manner quickly made her feel at ease, and she became much interested in the account that was given of the poor woman's sufferings and the dutiful affection shown by her eldest girl.

"Is it the one, mamma, whom we saw at Emmerton?" whispered Amy.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Saville, who had overheard the question : "she came home that evening almost happy, notwithstanding her mother's poverty and illness ; for it had been the first time she had ever been obliged to beg, and she had begun to despair of getting anything, when your mamma was so good to her. I learnt the whole story when she brought me the note, and scolded her a little for not coming to me at once ; but we had done something for her before, and she did not like to ask again. I cannot think," she continued, turning to Mrs. Herbert, "what the children will do ; for the mother is rapidly sinking in a decline ; and she tells me they have no near relation, excepting a grandmother, who is old and in want."

"How far off is their parish?" asked Mrs. Herbert.

"About ten miles : it is impossible to think of

their being moved now; for the poor woman can scarcely live more than a few days longer; yet the eldest girl seems to have no notion of her danger, and I dread the consequences of telling her, she is so fond of her mother."

"I should like to go to the cottage, if it is near," said Mrs. Herbert; "or at least, I should be glad to see the girl; for I suppose her mother had better not be disturbed."

"It will be very easy, if you desire it," replied Mrs. Saville; "for the children are kept in a separate room. I should wish you to see the woman herself, if she were equal to the sight of a stranger, for I am sure you would be pleased with her contentment and resignation."

"May I go too?" asked Amy, when Mrs. Saville left the room.

Mrs. Herbert thought for a moment, and then replied:—"You may, my dear, if you are willing to assist in helping these poor people; I mean by working for them, or doing any thing else which may be in your power; but it never does any one good to go and see people who are suffering, merely from curiosity."

"I think, mamma," said Amy, "I should be very willing to do something for them, if you would tell me what it should be."

"We must see them before we are able to decide," replied Mrs. Herbert, "but we shall soon know, for here is Mrs. Saville ready for her walk."

The cottage was but a short distance from the parsonage, and on the road to Emmerton, and the carriage was ordered to meet them there, that Mrs. Herbert might be spared any unnecessary fatigue.—Cottage it could not well be called, for it was little more than a hovel, divided into two parts; but it was the only one vacant in the neighbourhood, and

the poor woman had gladly availed herself of any shelter when she became so ill ; and though Mrs. Saville's kindness had made it assume a more comfortable appearance than it had done at first, it was still very destitute of furniture, and, to Amy's eyes, looked the picture of wretchedness. The eldest girl was attending to her mother, and the five younger ones playing before the door. At the appearance of the strangers, they all rushed into the house ; but Mrs. Saville was an old friend ; and, at her order, Amy's former acquaintance, Susan Reynolds, was called in. At first, Amy thought she should scarcely have known her again,—she was looking so much neater than when she had seen her that evening at Emmerton ; but she soon remembered her face, and the frightened manner which she still retained.

Mrs. Herbert made many inquiries as to the state of the family,—who were their relations, what they intended to do, and whether any of them had ever been to school ; and the girl showed by her answers that she had no idea of her mother's danger. When she got well, she said, they should all go home, and live with grandmother, and go to school. She had learnt to read and write herself ; but the little ones never had, only sometimes she had tried to teach them ; but now her whole time was taken up in nursing, and it was all she could do to keep them out of mischief, and mend their clothes.

Amy looked with a wondering eye upon the poor girl, as she gave this account of herself, and thought how impossible it would be for her to do as much ; and yet there seemed to be but a slight difference in their ages, and the advantages of health and strength were all on her side. Mrs. Herbert also remarked Susan's sickly countenance, and asked some questions as to her general health, but she could get very little information. Susan's care was entirely given

to others, and she thought but little of her own feelings. At times, she said she was very tired, and she did not sleep well at night; but then the baby often cried, and she was anxious about her mother, and so it was very natural. Again, Amy felt surprised as she remembered her comfortable bed, and her quiet sleep, and her mamma's watchfulness on the slightest appearance of illness.

"Does it not make you very unhappy," she asked, "to see your mother suffer so much?"

"Yes, miss," replied the girl; "but then I think of the time when she will get well."

"But supposing she should never get well," continued Amy.

Poor Susan started, as if the idea had never entered her head before; her eyes filled with tears, and, after a great struggle, she said, in a broken voice: "Mother hopes to go to heaven." As she spoke, Mrs. Herbert looked at her child, and Amy knew what the look meant; for it reminded her of the conversation at Emmerton, and she understood how true her mamma's words on that evening had been; for her uncle Harrington, with all his riches, could not expect a greater comfort than this for his death-bed. Conscious, however, that she had been the cause of a great deal of pain, her chief desire now was to make some amends; and, as they were about to go away, she whispered to her mamma, "I should like so much to do something for her."

"I will ask what would be most useful," replied Mrs. Herbert. "This young lady," she added, turning to Susan, "wishes to make something which may be of service to you. Should you like it to be a frock for yourself, or for one of the children?"

"For Bessy, ma'am, if you please," said Susan; her frock is all in rags, and it was quite old when she first had it." Bessy, who had run into the road to

avoid the strangers, was summoned, and her measure properly taken ; and Mrs. Herbert, slipping a shilling into Susan's hand, and telling her she should have the frock in a few days, left the cottage, followed by Mrs. Saville and Amy. Mrs. Saville promised to send word if any plan were proposed, which could be a comfort to the poor woman, or an assistance to her children, and then, wishing her good morning, Mrs. Herbert and Amy stepped into the carriage, and were once more on the way to Emmerton.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Herbert, finding that Amy made no observation on what had passed, "are you sorry that you went with me?"

"Oh, no! mamma," exclaimed Amy; "but I am sorry that I said anything to Susan about her mother not getting well. I am afraid I made her very miserable."

"It was thoughtless, my dear," replied Mrs. Herbert; "not but what it is quite necessary that Susan should be prepared; but then it would have been better for Mrs. Saville to have broken it to her gently. These things happen to us all, from our not remembering when we talk to people, to put ourselves in their situation. You would not have said it, if you had called to mind what your own feelings would have been in a similar case."

"But, mamma, it is impossible to be always on the watch."

"It is very difficult, but not impossible," said Mrs. Herbert: "habit will do wonders; and the earlier we begin thinking about other persons' feelings, the more easy it will be to us to do so always; and I wish you particularly to be careful now, my love; because you will probably be thrown much more amongst strangers than you have been; and half the quarrels and uncomfortable feelings that we wit-

ness in society, arise from some little awkwardness or thoughtlessness in speech, without any offence being intended. Though you are so young, Amy, you may soon learn by a little observation, what things are likely to pain people, and what are not."

"But," said Amy, "I thought it was always necessary to speak the truth."

"Yes," replied her mother; "it certainly is quite necessary whenever you are called upon to do it: for instance, if you had been asked whether you thought it likely that Mrs. Reynolds would get well, it would have been quite right in you to say, no; because you had heard so from Mrs. Saville: but there was no occasion for you to make the observation of your own accord."

"I think I know what you mean, mamma," said Amy, "but will you tell me one thing more? Why did you say it would do me no good to see the poor woman, if I did not mean to help her? I am sure, whether I could have done anything or not, I should have been very sorry for her."

"I should like to give a long answer to your question, my dear," answered Mrs. Herbert; but here we are at the lodge gate, and there is Stephen ready to welcome us, so we must leave it till another time."

"How quickly we have come!" exclaimed Amy. "Do, mamma, let me get out, and walk up to the house with Stephen; I want to hear what he says, and whether he is as impatient as I am."

But it was only the quick glance of the eye that betrayed Stephen's impatience as he turned to look up the road by which Mr. Harrington's carriage was expected to arrive. He seemed even little inclined for conversation, though Amy did her best to draw him out, as she one moment walked quietly by his side, then ran joyously before him, and then suddenly

stopped to ask him some questions about the preparations that had been made. His dress, too, was different from what it usually had been, excepting when he appeared at church on a Sunday. And Amy saw the black crape round his hat, which told that he, like her mamma, could not feel unmixed pleasure in the return of his master's family to their former home.

CHAP. IV.

As they entered the house, Amy's quick eye soon discovered the changes that had taken place since she was last there. A detachment of servants and a large quantity of furniture had arrived, three days before ; and Mrs. Bridget was now in all her glory, putting the finishing stroke to every thing, moving tables and chairs to suit her own taste, carefully effacing every symptom of dust, and ordering servants in all directions, partly because she thought they might as well be actively employed, and partly because she felt it was so grand to command tall men in livery. Her smart silk gown seemed to Amy's ears to rustle more audibly than ever as she met her in the hall, and there was a greater profusion of frills and ribbons about her wide-spreading cap, and above all, a mixture of importance and bustle in her step, which, with the shrill voice and up-turned nose and chin, showed that she felt herself for the time being, the superior of every one about her. Nevertheless, she received Amy most graciously, told her that she had persuaded Mrs. Herbert to rest in the great drawing-room, and endeavoured to induce her to do the same ; but this was quite contrary to Amy's inclinations, and the moment she could escape from Mrs. Bridget's fine words, she ran off to see that her mamma was comfortable, and the next minute her light step was heard as she danced along the galleries, exploring every room, new and old, to see what alterations were made in them. This was not quite according

to Bridget's notions of propriety, and she muttered to herself that it would not do—by and by, Miss Amy would soon find out that the house was not hers; but her partiality got the better of her dignity, and Amy continued the search, till having satisfied her curiosity, she stationed herself half-way between the lodge and the house to watch for the carriage. Every moment seemed now an age, but she was not long kept in suspense; after about ten minutes the rumbling of wheels was distinctly heard, and almost immediately afterwards the gates were thrown open, and a carriage and four drove rapidly down the avenue. Amy's heart beat quickly; she stood for a few moments looking at it, and then half frightened as it came nearer and nearer, she ran at full speed towards the house that she might be the first to give the joyful intelligence to her mother. But Mrs. Herbert's anxious ear had already caught the sound, and she was standing on the steps when her child flew to her almost breathless. Even in that moment of excitement, Amy could not help noticing the deadly paleness of her mother's face; but there was now no time for words, the carriage stopped at the door, and Mrs. Herbert, making a great effort to command her feelings, with a firm voice welcomed her brother and his family to Emmerton. Amy shrank behind her mamma, with but one wish, to avoid being observed by the tall grave-looking gentleman, whom she thought she never could call uncle; and Mrs. Herbert, considering only her brother's painful feelings, suffered him to pass with but very few words. Mrs. Harrington followed, and Amy scarcely remarked what her aunt was like, her whole mind being occupied with wondering whether the two fashionable-looking young ladies, who remained in the carriage search-

ing for their baskets and books, could possibly be her own cousins.

"Which is Dora, mamma?" she whispered.

But Mrs. Herbert moved forward, as her nieces ran up the steps, saying, "your mamma has left me to introduce myself, my dear girls. I can hardly imagine you have any remembrance of your aunt Herbert and your cousin Amy. I suppose I shall not be mistaken in calling you Dora, she added, as she kissed the one, who, from her height and general appearance, was evidently the eldest."

Amy's first curiosity was thus set at rest, but in its stead she was seized with an overpowering feeling of shyness. Dora looked almost as awful a person as her papa, whom she very much resembled. There was the same high forehead, dark eye, rather large nose, and haughty curl of the lip; and her height, which was unusual at her age, gave the idea of her being at least two years older than she really was; and Amy turned to Margaret in despair of finding any thing like a companion, but Margaret had a much younger face, and slighter figure, though she also was tall, and if her dress and manner had been less like those of a grown-up person, Amy might, perhaps, have felt more comfortable.

"You are quite right aunt," said Dora, in a sharp loud voice, which sounded disagreeably in Amy's ears, after the gentle tones to which she had listened from her infancy. "I am Dora, and this is Margaret, and there is little Rose behind."

"I begin to think," said Mrs. Herbert, "that after all Rose will be Amy's best playfellow; we were neither of us quite prepared for anything so tall and womanly, and Amy is such a tiny child,

you will think her more fit for the nursery than the schoolroom, I suspect."

"Is this Amy?" said Dora, giving her first a patronising tap on the shoulder, and then a hasty kiss, "I dare say we shall be very good friends," and without another word she ran into the house.

"I am sure we shall," said Margaret, in a more affectionate tone, and Amy, who had been chilled by Dora's manner, returned her embrace most cordially.

"I must give little Rose a kiss before we go into the drawingroom," said Mrs. Herbert, and "perhaps, Margaret, you will introduce me to Miss Morton."

Margaret stared, as if she did not quite understand her aunt's meaning. "Oh!" she said, "there is no occasion for that, we never do it with her; but, to be sure," she continued, seeing that Mrs. Herbert looked grave, "if you like it. Simmons, help Miss Morton down."

The footman moved forward a few steps, lifted little Rose from the carriage, and then held out his hand to Miss Morton, who was seated by the side of the lady's maid.

"Which is Miss Morton?" asked Mrs. Herbert in a low voice, much puzzled between two silk gowns, two silk bonnets, and two lace veils.

"Well, that is amusing!" exclaimed Margaret, pertly and bursting into a short conceited laugh. "Certainly, Morris is the nicest-looking of the two. Morris, my aunt did not know you and Emily Morton apart."

Amy felt very uncomfortable at this speech, though she scarcely knew why; and even Margaret, when the words were uttered, seemed conscious they were wrong; for with a heightened colour, and

without waiting to introduce Mrs. Herbert, she seized Amy's hand, and turned quickly away.

"Miss Morton will, I am sure, willingly pardon a mistake which only distance could have caused," said Mrs. Herbert, as she looked with interest at the delicate features and sweet expression of the peculiarly lady-like young girl, whose face had become like crimson on hearing Margaret's thoughtless speech. "I ought to know you; for I well remember seeing you some years ago, when I was staying with my brother at Wayland Court; but you were then such a child, that I confess I find a considerable alteration."

The answer to this was given in a low hurried tone; for Emily Morton had lately been so little accustomed to civility, that it confused her almost as much as neglect. She seemed only anxious to divert Mrs. Herbert's attention from herself to little Rose as soon as possible; and whispering to the child to go with her aunt into the drawingroom, she herself followed the lady's maid in a different direction. Amy was by this time rather more at her ease; and when Mrs. Herbert entered, she was standing by her uncle, and had found courage to say a few words. Mrs. Harrington was leaning back on the sofa, taking but slight notice of anything; and Dora and Margaret were examining the furniture, and making remarks which were far from pleasing to Amy's ears. The room was so dark, and the windows were so deep, and the furniture was so very old fashioned, they were quite sure they never could be happy in such a strange place: and after the first observations about the journey were over, Amy began to feel still more uncomfortable; for she fancied that her mamma wished her to be away, that she might talk to her uncle and aunt, and yet her cousins showed no

intention of leaving the room. At last, surprised at her own boldness, she whispered to Dora, who was standing next her, "Should you not like to see the house up stairs?"

Dora turned sharply round, and Amy could not quite understand the tone of her voice, as she said, "I suppose you wish to do the honours."

"Amy, my love, said Mrs. Herbert," who had overheard the question and answer, "You must recollect that your cousins are at home; they will go up stairs when they please."

Poor Amy felt puzzled and vexed; she had meant no harm, and yet both her mamma and Dora seemed annoyed. She did not, however, venture to say anything further, and was quite relieved when Mr. Harrington remarked, that it was a good notion, the girls had better go and choose their rooms at once, and settle themselves a little; and by that time they would be ready, perhaps, for their tea, as they had all dined on the road quite early.

Amy hung back, afraid of again doing something which her cousin might not like; but Margaret called to her to follow them, and in a few moments she had forgotten her discomfort in the pleasure of showing the different apartments, and pointing out all their several advantages. But Dora and Margaret were very difficult to please: one room was too small, another too large; one looked out at the back, and another at the side; one was too near the drawingroom, and another too far off. Still Amy did not care; for she had determined in her own mind that they would decide upon the bedroom oriel, which was just over the old schoolroom.

"Well! this really does seem as if it would do," said Margaret, as they entered. "Do look, Dora; it is the prettiest room in the whole house, and has

the prettiest view, too ; and the dressingroom is so large and nice."

"I care very little which room I have," said Dora, who was looking grave and unhappy. "The house is so sad and melancholy, it is all much the same ; we shall never be happy here."

"Not happy !" said Amy. "Oh yes ! by and by you will ; it never seems gloomy to me."

"That is because you have always been accustomed to it," replied Dora ; "if you had seen Wayland Court, you would think nothing of this."

"Dora is determined not to be happy," said Margaret : and then she added, in a whisper to Amy, "She was so very fond of poor Edward."

Dora evidently heard the words ; for the tears rushed to her eyes, and she bit her lip and began walking about examining the pictures ; but the painting which hung over the mantel-piece quite overcame all attempt at composure. It was the picture of Mr. Harrington's grandfather, taken when a boy. He was represented riding in the park, on a spirited pony ; and both Dora and Margaret saw in a moment the likeness to their brother. It was not natural for Dora to give way to any display of feeling ; but she had suffered very much during her brother's illness, — and this, with her regret at leaving Wayland, the fatigue of the journey, and what she considered to be the gloom of the house, entirely overpowered her ; and Amy, who had never been accustomed to the sight of any grief, except her mamma's quiet tears, became frightened. Margaret, too, looked astonished, but neither said nor did anything to assist or comfort her sister ; and Amy, having exhausted all the kind expressions she could think of, at last remembered Mrs. Herbert's infallible remedy of a glass of water, which soon enabled Dora, in some degree, to recover her-

self. At first she took but little notice of Amy, who stood by her side, begging her to try and be happy; in fact, like many other proud persons, she felt annoyed that she had given way so much before a mere child, as she considered her cousin to be; but there was no withstanding the winning tones of Amy's voice, and the perfect sincerity of her manner; and when, at last, she became silent, and looked almost as unhappy as herself, Dora's haughtiness was quite subdued, and she exclaimed, "I must love you, Amy; for no one else would care whether I were miserable or not."

Amy was surprised at the idea of any person's seeing others suffer and not feeling for them; but, rejoicing in the success of her efforts, she now tried to divert Dora's attention, by talking of the conveniences of the room and the view from the window. It was, at length, quite decided that they should occupy it, and the bell was forthwith rung to summon Morris. But the summons was given in vain; no Morris appeared. Again and again the rope was pulled, but no footsteps were heard in answer. Dora became irritated and Margaret fretful; and, after a considerable delay, Amy proposed that, as she knew the way to the housekeeper's room, she should try and find out Morris, who was very probably there. The thought of the strange servants was certainly alarming; but then her cousins were in distress, and she could help them; and, overcoming her timidity, she set off on what appeared to her quite an expedition. Boldly and quickly she threaded her way through the dark winding passages, every turn of which had been familiar to her from her childhood. But, when she stopped at the head of the back staircase, and listened to the hubbub of voices in the servants' hall, her first fears returned. Even Bridget's shrill tones were drowned in the

medley of sound, and Amy looked in vain, in the hope of seeing her cross the passage. After a few moments, however, she felt inclined to laugh at her own shyness, and ran quickly down, determining to inquire for Morris of the first person she met. The servants were rushing to and fro, in every direction, in all the important bustle of a first arrival, and one or two pushed by without taking any notice of her; but Amy, having resolved not to be daunted, still went on; and, as a door suddenly opened, immediately at her side, and a tall female servant (as she imagined), dressed in deep mourning entered the passage, she turned eagerly to her, pulled her gown, and begged to know where Morris was to be found. To her extreme consternation, her aunt's voice answered quickly and angrily,

"Who is this? Amy here! how very improper, amongst all the servants! Why did you not ring the bell, child? Go away this moment."

Amy's first impulse was to obey as fast as possible; but she knew she was doing no harm; and a few words, which her fright, however, made it difficult to utter, soon explained to Mrs. Harrington the cause of her appearance there. Morris was instantly summoned, and Amy returned to her cousins to recount her adventure.

"You don't mean to say mamma saw you amongst all the servants?" exclaimed Margaret. "Well! I would not have been you for something; it is just the very thing she most objects to. I have heard her lecture by the hour about it; we have never been allowed to go within a mile of the kitchen; and even little Rose, though she is such a baby, is kept just as strict."

"Well, but," said Amy, "why did you let me go if you knew my aunt would object?"

"Oh!" said Margaret, "you offered, and I thought mamma was safe in the drawingroom."

"And we wanted Morris," interrupted Dora; "I hate false excuses."

Amy felt rather angry, and thought she should not have done the same by them; but every thing this evening was so very new and strange, that she kept all her feelings to herself for the present, to be talked over with her mamma when they got home.

"But were you not very much frightened?" continued Margaret. "What did you say when mamma spoke to you?"

"I was frightened just at first," replied Amy; "but, then, I knew I was not doing any thing wrong, and so I did not really care."

"Well, if you are not the boldest little thing I ever met with," said Margaret; "even Dora would have cared, if she had been you."

"It is no use to say any more," exclaimed Dora, in rather an irritated voice, for she prided herself upon caring for nobody; "we must leave off talking now, and proceed to work. I am resolved to have all my things unpacked, and settled to-night; so I shall choose my drawers and closets, and say where I will have them put, and then Morris may as well begin."

"But it is so late, miss," said poor Morris, who was quite exhausted with the packing of the previous night and the fatigue of the long day's journey; "and yours and Miss Margaret's things are mixed, many of them."

Dora coloured, and said, angrily, "You forget yourself, Morris; I have told you that I choose to have my boxes unpacked to-night."

Amy longed to petition for a little mercy; but she was beginning to learn not to interfere where she had no power, and Dora immediately walked round

the room to examine drawers and closets; and to give directions, while Morris stood by, the picture of despairing fatigue. Margaret was too indolent to give herself much trouble about the matter, and Amy was rather astonished to see that Dora did not consult her in the least. She chose the best of every thing for herself; and when Morris inquired what Miss Margaret wished to have done, the only answer she could get was, that it did not signify; at any rate, to-morrow would be quite soon enough to settle, for she was far too tired to think about it now; and Morris, thankful for even a partial respite, asked for no more orders, but hastened away to make the proper selection of trunks and imperials. Dora and Margaret then arranged their dress and went down stairs to tea, followed by Amy, who felt alarmed as she thought of encountering her aunt's eye after her misdemeanour. Mrs. Harrington, however, took but little notice of her; she had in some degree recovered her energy, and was able to exert herself at the tea-table; and, as whatever she did always occupied her whole attention, she seemed to be quite engrossed in cups and saucers, milk and cream; and Amy placed herself at the farthest distance from her, taking care to have the urn between them, and reserving a place at her side for her mamma, who was standing at the window, talking in a low voice to Mr. Harrington. But when the labour of tea-making was over, Mrs. Harrington was able to think of other things, and her first inquiry was, what the girls thought of their rooms, and why they had been obliged to send Amy into the servants' hall.

"I suppose there is no bell, mamma," said Dora; "for we rang a great many times, but no one came."

"Where was Miss Morton?" said Mrs. Harrington; "she ought to have been with you: it would

not signify her going amongst the servants, but it was highly improper for your cousin."

"Emily Morton always thinks she has enough to do to take care of herself," said Margaret; "she is not over-fond of helping any one."

This struck Amy as very unjust; for Miss Morton had not been told where they were, and, of course, was not to blame. She was not aware that it was usual with Mrs. Harrington to put upon Miss Morton every thing that went wrong, and that she was expected to be at hand to assist Dora and Margaret on all occasions, no one considering, for an instant, whether the expectation were reasonable or unreasonable.

"But, mamma," said Dora, "I must tell you that Emily did not know we were gone to our rooms, so we ought not to find fault with her."

"But I do find fault with her, Dora," replied Mrs. Harrington; "she knows very well what is expected of her, and she ought to have inquired whether she could be of any use to you."

"But, mamma —" persisted Dora.

"I will not hear any buts, Dora; I must be the best judge of what Miss Morton's duties are; you are not generally so apt to take her part."

"Only I hate injustice" muttered Dora, in a sulky tone.

"And I can't bear Emily Morton," whispered Margaret, who was sitting next Amy.

"Can't bear her!" exclaimed Amy.

"Hush! hush!" said Margaret; "I don't want every one to hear."

Amy would have repeated her exclamation in a lower voice; but Mrs. Herbert now approached the tea-table, and began asking questions of her nieces, and trying as much as possible to make herself at home with them. Dora's answers were rather pert,

and Margaret's rather affected; but neither Mr. nor Mrs. Harrington checked them in the least, and Amy felt annoyed at hearing them speak to her mamma almost as familiarly as if she had been of their own age. She herself sat perfectly silent, too much in awe of her aunt's grave looks to venture an observation, and quite amused with watching what passed, and remarking to herself upon the magnificence of the silver tea-urn and its appendages, and the profusion of things with which the table was covered, so different from what she was accustomed to see at the cottage. She was not sorry, however, when her mamma proposed ordering the carriage; for the novelty of every thing did not quite make up for the restraint she was under. She was afraid not only of her uncle and aunt, but even of the footmen when they came near, and she anxiously observed Dora and Margaret, thinking she could not do wrong in imitating them.

"We shall see you to-morrow at the cottage I hope," said Mrs. Herbert to her brother, when the carriage was announced.

Mrs. Harrington answered for him in a short ungracious manner — "I don't know, indeed, there will be so much to arrange; perhaps the girls may manage it; but Mr. Harrington's time and mine will be completely occupied."

"I shall come and see you as soon as possible, you may be quite sure, said Mr. Harrington; it is too great a pleasure to talk over every thing with you, for me not to seize all opportunities of doing so, though, perhaps to-morrow, as Charlotte says, I may be very busy."

"Then we will expect the girls alone," replied Mrs. Herbert. "Amy is longing to do the honours of the cottage; and if they come about one o'clock, they can have their luncheon with us. Amy added her entreaties, and Margaret, with a great many

kisses, declared it would be the thing of all others she should most enjoy; while Dora simply said "good night," and expressed no pleasure about the matter. When Amy found herself alone with her mamma, her first wish was to talk over all that had passed, but Mrs. Herbert was looking very pale and exhausted, and her child had lately learnt to watch every change in her countenance, and to understand in a moment when it was necessary for her to be silent; she therefore said but little during their drive home; and it was not till Mrs. Herbert was seated in the armchair in her own room, that Amy ventured to express her feelings. "I may talk to you now, mamma," she said, "for there is no rumbling of the carriage to worry you; but you did look so ill when we left Emmerton, that I did not like to do it."

"Yes, my dear," said Mrs. Herbert, "it has been a very trying day; but you shall ease your mind before you go to sleep, and tell me how you like your cousins, and every thing you have been doing, and saying, and feeling."

"The doing and saying will be easy enough," replied Amy; "but, dear mamma, it was all so strange, I cannot tell at all what I have been feeling; and then I cannot make up my mind about anything, and that puzzles me. I always fancied I should be able to tell, at once, what I liked and disliked; but all the way home I have been trying to find out which of my cousins is the nicest; and one moment I think one thing, and the next another: and then the house was so changed with the different furniture, that it seemed quite like another place, only not quite another either, more like what the cottage seems to me in my dreams; and then I am so afraid of my aunt, and I think I made her angry, but I must tell you about that presently. I was so frightened at the men-servants

too, there were such a number, and that one with the black hair, who was not in livery, is so like Mr. Saville of Colworth, that I thought at first he was going to speak to me."

Mrs. Herbert smiled. "You have certainly contrived to get a curious medley in your head, Amy; but you will never be able to talk over all these things to-night, it is getting so late."

"No, mamma," said Amy, "I feel as if there would be something to say if I were to go on till to-morrow; but I should care for nothing else if I could only make out which of my cousins I like best."

"But," said Mrs. Herbert, "it is hardly possible to settle such a weighty matter, on so short an acquaintance; probably, if you decided it to night, you would change again to-morrow. I dare say, it will take some time before you can know them sufficiently well, really to make up your mind."

"Well," sighed Amy, "I suppose I must leave it. I think, though, I like Margaret, because she is affectionate; and Dora, because she seems to speak just what she means; but I liked Margaret much better when we were alone, than when she was talking to you, mamma, her voice and all seemed quite different."

"And what did you think of Rose?" asked Mrs. Herbert.

"Oh! I only saw her for a moment, she looked as if she must be a darling little thing, she is so very pretty; but, mamma, I cannot understand about Miss Morton. Is she a lady?"

"Yes, my dear, certainly; she is the daughter of a clergyman."

"But then, where was she all the evening? She did not come in at tea-time."

"I believe she generally spends the evenings

alone," replied Mrs. Herbert, "as I told you the other day."

"It seems so strange," said Amy; "and Margaret told me she could not bear her, so I suppose she must be very disagreeable."

"You must not judge of people merely from what you hear, but from what you see of them too," said Mrs. Herbert; "so don't determine upon poor Miss Morton's being disagreeable till you are more acquainted with her: she seemed to me to be very gentle and ladylike."

"I feel as if I never should be able to decide about any one now," sighed Amy, "I am so very puzzled; and I am not quite sure whether I have been happy to-night."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Herbert, "I must send you to bed, for I am sure if you sit up thinking and talking any more you will be unfit for every thing to-morrow. I only wish you to tell me what you could have done to make your aunt angry with you."

Amy repeated the history of her adventure, but Mrs. Herbert made no observation upon it; and she was then sent to her room to prepare for bed.

"You will come back to me when you are ready to read," said Mrs. Herbert. And in about half an hour's time Amy reappeared with her Bible.

"It seems so nice and quiet," she said, "to be able to sit down with you quite alone, mamma, after seeing so many people; and I think I shall go to sleep better when I have read my psalm as usual."

"I hope you will always find it a blessing to read your Bible, my dear; and I know myself that it is peculiarly so when we have been much excited; there is something so calm and soothing in it."

Amy read her psalm, and did not attempt to say any thing more about Emmerton, for she had always

been taught that her last thoughts, before she slept, should be of God and Heaven rather than of the things of earth ; only, as Mrs. Herbert bent over her, to give her the last kiss, she said, "Mamma, may I tell you one thing which came into my head to-night ? You know I have read in the Bible, and have heard people talk about the world, and that there are temptations in it, and that we ought to avoid it; and I never could quite understand this, because it seemed that I had no world, for you always do what is right, and there is no evil in the trees and flowers; and one day you said that the world was different to every body, and that it meant the things which tempted us to do wrong: and to-night, when I was saying my prayers, I recollected that I had felt angry with my cousins, and that you had said, 'that perhaps being with them would make me envious;' and then it came into my head, that perhaps Emmerton will be my world — do you think it will ?"

"Most probably it may be," said Mrs. Herbert.

"But then, mamma, will it be right to go there?"

"It is not right to shut ourselves up from our relations, and so lose opportunities of learning good from them, or setting them a good example," replied her mother. "If your cousins are better than yourself, they will, I hope, be of great use to you; and if they are not, you may try and benefit them. Your being envious and angry is your fault, not theirs; and if you were never to see them again, you would still have the same bad feelings in your mind. Renouncing the world does not mean shutting ourselves up and never seeing any one; but it does mean trying to avoid unnecessary occasions of temptation, as well as to overcome sin; and you will avoid the world, not by keeping away from your cousins, but by striving against evil feelings and

actions when you are with them, and not allowing yourself to envy them because they are richer and live in a larger house."

"I should like to talk a great deal more, mamma," said Amy, "only I am so sleepy."

"We must have some more conversation to-morrow," said Mrs. Herbert, as she left the room. And in two minutes Amy had forgotten all her difficulties and all her pleasures in the deep, calm repose which few but children can enjoy.

CHAP. V.

THE first impression on Amy's mind after her introduction to her cousins, on their arrival at Emmerton, was that of disappointment. The long-looked-for event had come and passed, but it had not brought with it the pleasure that had been anticipated. Her cousins were not at all what she had expected to see; and she felt as if they were more like strangers now than when she had only pictured them to herself such as she desired. And yet it was so strange to her to be unhappy or discontented, that she did not long dwell upon the things which had annoyed her in them, but turned with pleasure to the hope that it was her own fault they did not seem more kind and agreeable, and that when she knew them better she should find them all she could wish. There was great enjoyment too in talking over every thing with her mamma at breakfast, which she could easily do now that the fatigue and excitement were gone; and so fully did Emmerton engross her thoughts that she entirely forgot Susan Reynolds and the promised frock, till Mrs. Herbert produced it, ready prepared, after the lessons were finished, and begged her to do as much as she could before her cousins' arrival.

"It will not be much, I am afraid, mamma," said Amy, "for it is getting late, and they agreed to be here by one; but I must do more this evening."

"Yes," said Mrs. Herbert, "I should be sorry if the poor child were disappointed."

"So should I too, mamma. Now I have seen her

I really do feel it will be a pleasure to help her. And will you tell me, whilst I am working, what you had not time to speak about yesterday? I mean, why it never does people any good to go and see others suffer merely from curiosity."

"It not only does them no good, but it does them harm," replied Mrs. Herbert, "and for this reason : God gives to almost every one, and especially to young people, many kind amiable feelings, as a sort of treasure which they are carefully to keep: now these kind feelings, as people grow older, gradually die away as they get accustomed to the sight of suffering, and so at last they are likely to become cold and hard-hearted; and there is only one sure way of preventing this, — by doing kind actions whenever we are blessed with kind feelings. Perhaps you would rather I should explain myself more clearly," added Mrs. Herbert, as Amy laid down her work, and looked thoughtfully in her mother's face. "When you saw Susan Reynolds yesterday you had compassion for her, and a great wish to help her; this was the good feeling given you by God: but, supposing you had thought that, after all, it was too much trouble to work for her, you would soon have forgotten her, and the next time you saw her you would probably have pitied her less, and the next time less still; and if you had gone on so you might have ended in becoming perfectly cold and selfish: but by determining to do something you have kept up your interest; and you will find that your kind feeling will continue and increase, not only for her, but for other persons you may see in distress."

"But then I have heard you say, mamma, that we ought not to follow our feelings entirely."

"No," replied Mrs. Herbert; "because very often our feelings are wrong, and therefore, we must have some other rule to go by, or we shall continually

mistake our duties ; but when they are right they are given us by God to make those duties easy and pleasant ; and if we do not encourage them, we shall find when we grow old that it will be very difficult, if not almost impossible, to do right, however we may wish it."

"Then, mamma, if we had always good feelings there would be no occasion to do any thing but just what we felt inclined : how very nice that would be."

"There is but one way of getting these good feelings," said Mrs. Herbert, "and that is by doing what we know we ought, whether we like it or not ; and only one way of keeping them when we have got them, by taking care always to act upon them ; and if we begin when we are young it is astonishing how easy it will soon become. I know you like an illustration, Amy, to make you remember things ; so now I will give you one, to teach you the difference between feelings and duty. Feelings are like the horses which carry us quickly and easily along the road, only sometimes they stumble, and sometimes they go wrong, and now and then they will not move at all : but duty is like the coachman who guides them, and spurs them up when they are too slow, and brings them back when they go out of the way."

"Thank you, mamma," said Amy, as she ran to the window at the sound of approaching wheels ; "I think I shall always remember now. And here come my uncle's feelings down the lane,—beautiful grey ones ; and there is duty on the coach-box driving them."

"Well," observed Mrs. Herbert, smiling, "I hope duty will guide the feelings properly round the corner, for it is a very awkward turn."

Amy looked anxiously into the carriage as it

drove up, and with great delight saw that it contained only her two cousins, for her aunt's stern look was sufficiently impressed upon her recollection to make the idea of meeting her again disagreeable. "I am so glad you are come!" she exclaimed to Margaret, who was the first to alight; "I have finished all my lessons, and dinner will very soon be ready, and afterwards, if you like, we can go all over the garden."

"I should not think that would take very long," said Dora, casting a contemptuous glance around.

Amy, for a moment, felt almost ashamed, as if there were something disgraceful in not having a large garden; but she did not make any reply, and led her cousins into the house, with a secret dislike of their seeing how different it was from Emmerton, and a dread lest Dora should make some more observations. In her aunt's presence, however, Dora was rather subdued, and did not venture to remark upon any thing, though Amy, who watched her carefully, noticed the inquisitive look she gave to the furniture, as if she were determined to know exactly what every thing was made of: and when Mrs. Herbert left them, her first question was, "So this is your largest room, Amy, is it?"

"Yes," said Amy; "and we have a dining-room and study besides."

"And is that all?" added Margaret.

"All but the bed-rooms," replied Amy.

"Well! how odd it must be to live in such a tiny house!" continued Margaret. "I should get so tired of it. To have lived all one's life in three rooms! Fancy, Dora, how strange it must be."

"But," said Amy, "it does very well for mamma and me. You know many poor people have only one."

"That may be all right for poor people ; but *you* are a lady ; you are our cousin."

"Oh !" said Dora, "it does not signify when people are accustomed to it. And now Amy will be able to come and see us at Emmerton ; and she can walk about the grounds ; and sometimes, I dare say, mamma will let her have a drive in the carriage, which will make a nice change."

Amy was extremely inclined to say that she never wished to do anything of the kind, for she remembered that only a week before she was able to walk all over Emmerton, both in the house and the park, without any person's permission being required but her mamma's.

"You will like that very much, shan't you, dear?" said Margaret, giving her a kiss.

The kiss was not returned ; but Amy coloured, and only replied, that she did not want any change.

"I declare you look quite offended," exclaimed Margaret ; "doesn't she, Dora ? Well ! I would not be so touchy for a great deal."

"I don't wish to be offended, and I am sure I could not bear to be touchy," said Amy, with tears in her eyes ; "only I am very happy with mamma."

"Of course," said Margaret : "but then you need not be angry with us merely because we wish to give you a little pleasure ; besides, it is so unkind : I thought you would be fond of us, instead of getting so cross in a minute."

This was rather more than poor Amy could bear, for she had never been blamed unjustly in her life, and believed that she must be in the wrong whenever any fault was found with her. She was conscious, too, of having felt angry ; and sorrow for this, added to a slight remaining irritation against her cousins, made her tears flow fast.

"How silly!" exclaimed Dora. "We never meant to vex you: you will get us all into a scrape if you cry, for my aunt will be back in a moment."

"No one gets into a scrape with mamma," said Amy: "but I am sure it would be me she would blame now; and I am so sorry I was cross."

"Never mind any thing more about it," said Margaret; "just look natural again, and then we shall not care."

Amy did her best to look natural; but her mamma's quick eye soon perceived, on her return, that there had been something amiss: however, she asked no questions, knowing that she should hear every thing when they were alone; and both Dora and Margaret were considerably relieved when they found themselves seated at the dining-table, with Amy looking as bright and happy as usual.

"You must make a good luncheon, my dears," said Mrs. Herbert; "for I suppose you dine very late."

"Oh, no!" replied Dora, "this will be our dinner: mamma always dislikes our being late."

"She says it makes us ill, and spoils our complexions," added Margaret, casting, at the same time, a glance at her white neck in the glass which hung opposite to her; "so we always dine about two with Emily Morton and Rose in the schoolroom."

"Is Miss Morton very strict?" asked Amy.

"Strict!" answered Dora, with a toss of her head. "Who should she be strict with? She is not our governess."

"But then she teaches you some things," said Amy.

"Oh, yes, music and drawing; but that any one can do. I should just as soon think of attending to Morris as to her."

"Only," said Mrs. Herbert, in a quiet, grave

tone, "that she is older than you are, and is a lady by birth and education."

Dora pouted and bit her lip, but she did not dare make any pert reply, and only showed her displeasure by the sulky way in which she answered her aunt's further questions. Margaret was more communicative; and Amy soon became amused with her account of Wayland, and all they had been accustomed to do: but there was no interest shown for her in return, for Margaret seemed to find every subject dull which did not immediately relate to herself. She appeared unwilling, also, to mention Miss Morton again, though Amy wished more to hear of her than of any other person or thing; and when, after the dinner was ended, Mrs. Herbert suggested they should go into the garden, she determined to ask them why they disliked her."

"Do let me know," she said to Margaret, as they seated themselves in the arbour, after exploring the not very spacious domain, "why you don't like Miss Morton. I told mamma, last night, that you said you could not bear her."

"How ill-natured!" exclaimed Margaret; "I declare I never will tell you any thing again. Unless you promise not to repeat to aunt Herbert what we say, I can assure you we shall take special care not to talk to you."

"Oh, Margaret!" said Amy, looking very much distressed; "indeed I meant no harm. But I cannot make such a promise; for I always do tell mamma every thing, and she is never angry."

"That won't do," replied Margaret: "you *must*, or we shall not talk to you."

"But if there is no harm in what you say," asked Amy, "why must I not repeat it?"

"It is no use arguing," replied Margaret. "I never could bear the notion that every word I said

would be told over again ; and therefore, if you will not promise, I will not talk : that is all." And she threw herself back, and began picking flowers to pieces. Then, after a few moments pause, she turned to Dora, and said, "That was a very ill-natured trick she played on papa's birthday,—was it not?"

Dora nodded assent ; and Margaret looked at Amy, hoping to excite her curiosity, for she was longing above all things to find some excuse for breaking her resolution. But Amy sat immovable, only appearing thoughtful and unhappy. A second silence ensued, which was broken again by Margaret, who exclaimed, in a pettish tone, that the sun was so hot it was not to be borne : she wondered how any one could have built an arbour in such a position.

Dora, though screened by the projecting branch of a tree, immediately took up the parasol at her side ; and Margaret began lamenting that she had left hers in the house.

"Can't you spare me yours, Dora?" she said : "you never remembered you had it till I complained of the heat."

"You always leave every thing behind you," was Dora's answer ; "and I am sure I shall be burnt as brown as a berry if I don't shade myself. You had better go in and fetch your own parasol, and that will make you recollect it another time."

"I know who left their handkerchief behind them only this morning," retorted Margaret ; "and I know who sent Emily Morton all over the house to look for it."

"That was only once in a way," said Dora. And here a long bickering dialogue was carried on between the sisters, at the commencement of which Amy disappeared ; and before it had been decided

which possessed most disagreeable qualities, a subject that was discussed with great warmth and earnestness, Margaret found herself sheltered from the sun by the intervention of a parasol.

"Where did you get it?" she exclaimed to Amy; "you did not bring it with you."

"No," replied Amy; "I got it from the house just now."

"And did you really go in on purpose? Well, that was very good-natured, I must say: and now I do think, as a reward, I will tell you about Emily Morton."

"A reward to herself, not to you, Amy," said Dora; "she has been dying to tell you all the time. I would have done it, only I knew it would come out if you had patience to wait."

"But," replied Amy, in rather a timid voice, "I hope you understand, Margaret, that I cannot make any promise about mamma."

"Why don't you hear what she has to say first," said Dora, "and then talk about the promise afterwards."

"I would rather settle it first," answered Amy, firmly; "I should not have any pleasure in knowing it if I thought Margaret were mistaken about me."

"Well! never mind now," said Margaret, "I am not going to speak treason; and you are so good-natured, Amy, I am sure you will never repeat anything to get us into a scrape."

"Perhaps I am not good-natured," persisted Amy; "so pray don't tell me unless you quite like it."

"But I do quite like it now; and I am sure you are good-natured, and so you shall hear. I want to tell you what Emily Morton did last year on papa's birthday, and then I know you will hate her as

much as we do. We have always had quite a fête given then ; for papa says it was begun when he came of age, and he does not like to give it up."

"Oh !" said Amy, "that must have been what mamma was telling me about the other day ; she gave me a long account of it."

"And did not aunt Herbert think it very delightful?" asked Dora. "Papa always speaks of it with such pleasure."

"Yes," answered Amy ; "she says it was one of the happiest days of her life."

"It must be very nice," continued Dora, "to have every one looking up to one and envying one. I dare say aunt Herbert wished she had been papa."

"She said she wished it then," replied Amy ; "but I am sure she does not now."

"What!—not to have two great houses, and heaps of servants, and plenty of money?" said Margaret.

"But," replied Amy, "mamma, when she told me the story, said that we all had the promise of much greater things given us at our baptism, and so it did not signify."

"What do you mean, Amy?" asked Dora, in a tone of extreme surprise. "Great things promised us at our baptism ! I never knew any thing I had either given or promised me then, excepting my name, and my old purple Bible and Prayer-book."

"Oh, Dora !" exclaimed Amy, "pray do not talk so ; I am sure it must be very wrong ; for mamma says that it has been the greatest thing in all my life, and that if I do as I promised I would then, I shall be quite sure of being happy when I die : and every year, on the day of my baptism, she makes me read over the service, and talks to me about it."

"Then it is very strange, that is all I can say,"

replied Dora. "I never in my life before heard any one say that baptism was any good besides giving a child a name."

Amy looked still more shocked. "Oh! but Dora," she said, very gravely, "indeed, it must be a great good; for you know when we were baptized God gave us His Holy Spirit, that we might be able to do our duty."

"I don't understand what you mean, Amy," said Dora, hastily, "and I don't think you understand yourself, so we will not talk any more about it. Do, Margaret, go on about Emily Morton."

"I will," said Margaret, "if you will not interrupt me so. It was last year, Amy, on the day of the fête; and two of my aunts, mamma's sisters, and my uncle, Sir Henry Charlton, came to Wayland to keep it. Uncle Henry knows a great deal about drawing, and he always likes to see ours; and he had promised us a long time before that if we could show him six good drawings on papa's birthday, he would give us each a beautiful picture done by one of the first artists in London. I worked very hard at first, and then I got a little tired, but I made sure I should be able to finish them in time; only, somehow or other, I was so hurried at last, for we had some new dresses to be tried on, and there were some songs to be practised, and there were a good many people staying in the house, that I had only five finished. I was in a great fright, and my only hope was that uncle Henry would not count them: but in the morning, after he had looked at Dora's, I watched him count *them*, and then I thought I had no chance; but when I came to show mine, I found that by mistake one of Emily Morton's had got amongst them, which made them just right, and she was not in the room, so I had no fear of any thing being said; and it was

such a beauty, I was sure my uncle would be pleased. Well! he looked at them all, and said they were very good, and was admiring Emily Morton's especially, when, to my great horror, in she came, and he immediately called out to her to look at the drawings with him. I could not imagine what to do; and at last I thought perhaps she would be good-natured for once in her life, so I went to her directly, and whispered all about it, and asked her to let it pass, or I should lose my beautiful picture; and really, Amy, it was worth a great deal of money; and, do you know, she actually declared she would not do it. I know I looked miserable, and I never begged so hard for any thing in my life; and at last I was obliged to give it up, for uncle Henry began to wonder what we were talking about, and so I ran out of the room, and then it all came out: and there was such a great fuss; uncle Henry preached me a sermon, and papa and mamma were *so* cross; in fact, I never got into such a scrape in my life before, and all because of Emily Morton. Now shouldn't you hate her, Amy, if you were me?"

Amy was silent.

"Oh!" continued Margaret, "you could not be so unkind as to take her part."

"But," said Amy, "it seems as if she were right."

"How can that be? I am sure no one can be right who is unkind."

"No," said Amy, looking a little perplexed; "but then it would have been deceit."

"Deceit! what deceit?" asked Margaret: "she had nothing to do with it; all I wanted was for her to hold her tongue."

"But your uncle would have thought the drawing was yours, when it was not."

"And what harm would that have done? I will

venture to say I could have finished just as good a one if I had tried ; it was only a sketch. No, no, it was mere ill-nature ; she wished for the picture herself."

"I tell you what, Margaret," said Dora, "she did not wish any such thing, because uncle Henry pressed her to have it, and she refused, and made him put it by till this year, that you might try again."

"I hate such hypocrites," said Margaret ; "and she is so cold-hearted too. I used to kiss her and love her when first she came, but she never seemed to care a bit about it ; and now I never go near her if I can help it."

"I should not mind any thing," said Dora, "if she did not put one down so : but she has such a way of saying things are right, I can't bear it ; as if we did not know what was right as well as she does. I shall teach her the difference between Miss Harrington and Miss Morton, I can tell her, when I come out."

"And, then, people call her pretty," interrupted Margaret. "It makes me so angry, sometimes, to hear them go on about her beautiful eyes, and her black hair. She need have some beauty, for she spends quite enough time in dressing herself, I know."

Amy listened to these remarks in silent astonishment, and with an increasing feeling of dislike to Miss Morton ; not that she agreed with Margaret as to her unkindness in the affair of the picture, for her strict sense of what was right and sincere, told her, in a moment, that she could not have acted otherwise : but it was impossible to hear so much said against a perfect stranger, without thinking that there must be some foundation for it, especially as Amy was accustomed to be very particular her-

self in every thing she said, and had not yet learned to suspect her cousins of exaggeration.

"How very sorry you must be," she exclaimed, at length, "that Miss Morton ever came to you."

"Sorry!" repeated Margaret. "Yes, I think we are sorry: but one thing I can tell you, Amy, she will not stay with us long. I resolved, directly after that business of the picture, that I would never rest till I got her out of the house; and Dora feels the same."

"I beg your pardon," replied Dora; "I do not care enough about her: as long as she keeps to her own room, and does not plague me with constantly ringing in my ears that things are right, she may stay or not, as she likes."

"But," said Amy, "you cannot send her away; it must be your mamma."

"What a simpleton you are!" exclaimed Margaret, laughing: "there are a hundred ways of getting rid of a person you don't like; and I tell you I should have done it long ago, if it had not been for Rose, who is so fond of her, and such a pet of mamma's, that she is humoured in everything. Why, how surprised you look, and frightened too!"

"Only," said Amy, "I thought that my aunt would do just as she pleased, without asking any one."

"I can't explain," said Margaret, "if you cannot understand; but you will learn all about it when you have been a little at Emmerton with us: and you will see, too, how she spoils Rose; she makes her so foolish, that she cannot bear to go to any one else, except mamma, when she is in the room."

"Then Miss Morton must be very kind to her," said Amy.

"Kind! Yes, to be sure, she is; she knows quite well that if it were not for Rose, she would not stay long in our family."

"And does she teach Rose entirely?" asked Amy.

"Yes, now she does, though, I believe, mamma never intended it at first; but there was so much to be done with us, that it was very inconvenient having so young a child at the same time; and so Emily Morton offered to take the charge of her, and she has gone on ever since. It is very odd of mamma allowing it when she dislikes governesses so; but I think it would break Rose's heart if there were to be any alteration."

"And what have you to do with her, then?"

"Oh! we have regular music and drawing lessons twice a week, and she attends to us, at other times, besides; and then we breakfast, and dine, and drink tea with her, and make her useful when we want her. She does everything, almost, for Rose; but that is her own choice. But I dare say you will know all about her ways soon; for when papa and mamma were talking of coming to Emmerton, I heard them say it would be a great advantage for you to learn of her; and I dare say they will arrange for you to have music and drawing lessons with us. It will be so nice being together often."

And Margaret gave Amy a kiss, which was very heartily returned. Amy looked at Dora, expecting something of the same kind from her; but Dora was playing with her watch-chain, and appeared to be taking no notice.

"I shall like being with you," replied Amy; "but I shall not like to learn of Miss Morton. Mamma is so kind, I don't know what I should do if any one were cross to me."

"But is your mamma quite regular with you?" asked Margaret.

"She used to be," said Amy; "but, lately, she has been very often ill: she gets so unhappy about papa."

"Oh!" observed Margaret, "I heard papa and mamma talking about her last night, after you were gone, and they said ——"

"Hush, Margaret!" said Dora, turning suddenly round; "it does not signify what they said. How can you be so thoughtless?" she added, in a lower tone.

Margaret was about to make an angry reply, but she was prevented by Amy, who anxiously begged to be told every thing. Again Margaret would have spoken, but Dora a second time interposed; and at the same moment Mrs. Herbert appeared, and the conversation was interrupted. As they returned to the house, however, Amy remarked that Dora contrived to speak a few words to her sister alone; and, when she afterwards repeated her entreaty, Margaret's reply was, that Dora and she, thought it better not to tell. This did not satisfy Amy: but she could not urge Margaret to do anything she felt was wrong; and, after pondering in her own mind for some minutes what Mrs. Harrington could possibly have said, she, as usual, quieted her uneasiness by determining to talk to her mamma in the evening.

"The carriage is waiting for you, my dears," said Mrs. Herbert, as they walked towards the house; "and, if you could find room in it for Amy and me, I should like to go with you as far as the rectory; for Mrs. Walton has asked us to spend the evening with her, and I am always glad to be saved a walk."

Amy looked delighted, and ran up stairs with great glee to get ready; and Margaret followed, offering to help her.

"Whom shall you see at the rectory?" she said, as Amy was expressing her happiness in rather ecstatic terms. "Are there children of your own age?"

"No," replied Amy; "no one but Mr. and Mrs. Walton; they had one child, but it died."

"But what shall you do? It must be so dreadfully dull with only old people."

"Oh! no; it is never dull, — they are so kind, and the place is so pretty; and sometimes Mrs. Walton tells me stories about what she did when she was a little girl; or, if they talk about things I don't care for, there is a beautiful large book of fairy tales, and I sit up in a little window, away by myself, and fancy that all the things I read about happened in the forest. I sometimes make out all the places just as if they were real. 'You know one can fancy almost any thing in a wood; there are so many little winding walks and odd places, and there are some green spots of turf, with large trees all round, which look just like the fairies' homes. I have named them all after the stories, and when I read I can see them quite plainly in my mind.'"

"Well! that is a strange way of amusing yourself," exclaimed Margaret, in a tone of astonishment; "though, to be sure, I can understand the pleasure of reading a story, but then it must be about real people, — lords and ladies, I like: I never cared in the least about fairies and such unnatural things; and I quite wonder to see Rose so pleased with a little book she has, about them."

Amy was in too great a hurry to reply, but dressed herself as quickly as possible, and in a few minutes was ready for her visit. The old rector was standing at the door as Mr. Harrington's carriage drove up, and looked rather alarmed at the sight of such an unexpected number of visitors; but Mrs. Herbert soon relieved his mind by introducing her nieces to him; and, if Dora had not been occupied with the contrast between the simplicity of the rectory and the grandeur of Emmer-

ton, and Margaret with ridiculing the curiously-cut coat, brown wig, and gold shoe-buckles, which had been Mr. Walton's constant style of dress for the last forty years, both might have been pleased with the affectionate interest expressed for them, and the many inquiries which were made for every member of the family. As it was, Mrs. Herbert was hurt at their careless replies, and felt as angry as was possible for one so gentle, when she heard Margaret's loud whisper to her sister, "Did you ever see such a quiz?"

Apparently, Mr. Walton did not observe this, for he still continued entreating them to come in, and assuring them that Mrs. Walton would never forgive him if he allowed them to depart without her seeing them. Dora, who was always an inch taller and several years older, in her own estimation, whenever she found herself mistress of her father's handsome carriage, drew herself up with a consequential air, and regretted that it would not be in their power to stop, for they wished to be home by a certain hour.

"Is that really the case, my love?" said Mrs. Herbert: "could you not spare one moment for Mrs. Walton? She knew your mother when she was a child, and she has been longing to see you."

"I dare say mamma will call in a day or two," said Dora: "we really are in a hurry now."

"I will undertake to make your peace with your mamma," said Mrs. Herbert: "you would not be detained five minutes."

"I really am sorry," persisted Dora, quite proud of the power of saying "No," to persons older than herself; "but I am afraid we must go home."

Mr. Walton, who had been listening to the debate with a mixed expression of amusement and

regret in his countenance, now came forward, and, laying his hand on Dora's arm, said, "My dear young lady, you are not accustomed to have a will of your own, I can quite see, because you are so glad to exercise it. Now, I never like to prevent young people from pleasing themselves, so you shall follow your inclination and go home; but, whenever this same inclination shall take another turn and bring you to the rectory, I will promise you a sincere welcome for the sake of your father and mother, and auld lang syne; and, now, good-by."

Dora felt abashed by the kindness with which this was said, as well as by the reproof which she knew was intended; but she put on an indifferent air, and giving a hasty nod to Amy, and a few parting words to her aunt, reassured her offended dignity by calling out "home," in a loud voice, to the footman, who was standing at the door, and the carriage drove off. For a moment a slight pang of envy crossed Amy's mind as her cousin's grandeur was contrasted with her own insignificance; but it was soon forgotten when she found herself seated, as usual, on a low stool by the side of Mrs. Walton, who, with one hand placed upon hers and the other fondly smoothing her dark hair, heard with real pleasure her description of all she had been doing since her last visit; and, as Amy became more and more animated, the old rector himself was attracted to the window, and for a few moments, while watching the bright eyes and sweet smile of his young favourite, could almost have imagined he was again listening to the voice of his own child. Mrs. Walton was several years younger than her husband, but rheumatic attacks of a very painful kind had rendered her nearly helpless, so that the difference between them appeared much less than it really was. Age and infirmity had subdued her

naturally quick, eager disposition, into a calm and almost heavenly peace, without in the least diminishing her interest in every thing that was passing around her. Her mind, like her dress, seemed to be totally different from that of the every-day world : the dress—was fashioned according to the custom of years gone by ; the mind—of those which were to come ; and few could converse with her, without feelings of respect almost amounting to awe, for her goodness,—her patience, her meekness, her charity, her abstraction from all earthly cares. Amy could not as yet fully appreciate all her excellence, though she could understand it in some degree. She had never heard Mrs. Walton spoken of but with reverence ; and, perhaps, half the pleasure she felt in talking so freely to her arose from the consciousness of being petted and loved by one to whom persons so much older than herself agreed in looking up. There was an additional reason for Amy's enjoyment on this evening : she had, willingly and unknown to her mother, resolved to give up her favourite volume of fairy tales, that she might go on with the frock for Susan Reynolds ; and even before the tea-things were brought in, she produced her basket and began working industriously ; and from having thus denied her own inclination in one instance, every thing else appeared doubly delightful.

"Why, my little woman," said the rector, as he remarked her unusual occupation, "what makes your fingers so busy to-night ? I thought you always studied the lives of the fairies whenever you came here."

Mrs. Herbert, who had been talking at the other end of the room, turned to see what Amy was about ; and her smile was quite a sufficient reward for the sacrifice which had been made. "I did not think of reminding you of your work, my darling," she

said ; "but you will not regret giving up your pleasure for one evening for the sake of another."

"And who is this other?" asked the rector.

Mrs. Herbert told the story ; and spoke highly in praise of Susan, and her attention to her mother.

"She is in good hands," said Mr. Walton. "I never knew either Mr. or Mrs. Saville take up a case of the kind without managing to be of great service : and whether the poor woman should live or die, you may depend upon the children having found a friend for life."

"And, my dear child," added Mrs. Walton, "you will not forget you have a second purse at Emmerton rectory if it should be needed."

"I should be very ungrateful if I were to forget it," replied Mrs. Herbert, as she pressed the worn but delicate hand which was held out to her ; "though, now that my brother is at the Hall, I think my first appeal must be to him."

"I suspect I shall have a regular jubilee celebrated in the parish," said the rector. "Do you remember the first we ever had, some twenty years ago, when your brother came of age? We have not had such another since."

"There was one other great day, surely," said Mrs. Walton. "My memory sometimes seems to get sadly confused even about things which passed years ago, and which they say are always remembered the best ; but, surely, there was one other fête, — what was it for?"

Amy looked up from her work, and whispered in Mrs. Walton's ear — "Mamma and aunt Edith's wedding-day."

Mrs. Herbert caught the words, and the tears started to her eyes. She turned away, and, taking up a newspaper which lay upon the table, began looking over the contents.

"Ah! yes, my love, you are right," said Mrs. Walton, in a low tone. And Mr. Walton, anxious to change the subject, made some remarks upon a great fire which had taken place in a neighbouring village, and the account of which was in that day's paper.

"Amy," said Mrs. Herbert, "there is a very interesting story of the conduct of a little girl during the fire; you may read it if you like."

Amy took the paper and read what her mother pointed out; and as she came to the end her eye caught the first words of another paragraph, and she exclaimed, "Dear mamma, here is something about India."

Mr. Walton looked very grave. "It is nothing good, I am afraid," he said; "I was in hopes you would have heard it before you came here: they say the war has broken out again."

"The war!" repeated Mrs. Herbert, in a suppressed tone of deep anxiety, as she seized the paper; "but it may be nothing to me."

The paragraph was short, but decisive. There was no doubt the war had recommenced, and that the chance of obtaining tidings of Colonel Herbert was less than ever; at least such was Mrs. Herbert's fear, though Mr. Walton did his utmost to convince her it could make no difference: but whilst she listened to his words, they did not sink into her heart; and she turned from the thought of her increased anxiety if her husband continued silent, to the danger of the war should he return into it, till it seemed impossible to find comfort in any thing. Amy stood by her mother in silent suffering; she felt as if she had been the cause of inflicting the pain by calling her attention to the paper: but she could do nothing to relieve her, and was obliged to wait patiently, though sorrowfully, till her usual self-command was

restored. After some time Mrs. Herbert was again able to allude to the subject of the war; and she then spoke of the probabilities and dangers which it involved, without hesitation: but she was so much shaken by the unexpected news, that, notwithstanding the disappointment to all parties, no objection was made when she proposed returning home much earlier than usual. It was a melancholy conclusion to Amy's evening; but Mr. Walton endeavoured to comfort her by promising, if possible, to call very early the next day to see her; and Mrs. Walton held out the hope of another visit very soon. Amy's chief thought, however, was for her mamma; and a wish arose in her mind, which she had often felt before, that she were a few years older, and could be of greater service: and it was not till she had again received the often repeated assurance of being now Mrs. Herbert's greatest earthly treasure, and a real comfort to her in her distress, that she could lie down happily to sleep, even though she had unburdened her mind of the chief events of the day, and of the secret between her cousins. Amy was not aware that by doing this she added to her mamma's anxiety, for every thing convinced Mrs. Herbert, more and more, that Dora and Margaret were very different companions from those she would have chosen for her child. But there was little to be feared while Amy continued so perfectly open; and, at any rate, it was better that she should be with them, whilst her mother was near to warn her against evil, than become acquainted with them, for the first time, when she might be obliged to live with them entirely. The secret, too, gave Mrs. Herbert a pang, though she tried to persuade herself of what, in fact, was nearly the truth, that Dora had heard of the renewal of the war, and of the increased

anxiety which it would bring : happily she did not know that Mr. Harrington had also expressed his opinion, that it would have been useless to expect any further tidings of Colonel Herbert, even if the peace had continued; for he firmly believed that nothing but some dreadful event could have occasioned their total ignorance of his movements. Mrs. Herbert, indeed, could hardly give Dora credit for so much thoughtfulness; but in this she did her injustice. Dora could often be thoughtful and kind when her pride did not stand in the way; and she could be sorry for the sufferings of others, when they were forced upon her notice, though she had never been taught to be upon the watch for them; whilst even her haughtiness did not prevent her from feeling an interest in the quiet grief which was expressed in every feature of her aunt's countenance, and which seemed constantly to check every happier feeling.

CHAP. VI.

SEVERAL days passed before Amy again saw her cousins : there were so many arrangements to be made in their new home that no convenient moment could be found for paying a visit to the cottage ; and during this time Mrs. Herbert had very much recovered her tranquillity, and began even to hope that the war, terrible though it seemed, might be the means of bringing her some tidings of Colonel Herbert.

The last letter she had received from him had mentioned his intention of making an expedition into the interior of the country ; and a friend, who had returned to England soon afterwards, confirmed the fact of his departure. His silence might be accounted for, by his having entrusted letters to private hands, and by the difficulty of communication in the distant province to which he had gone : but now that the war had again broken out, she could not avoid hoping that he would make every effort to return ; and that she should see his name in the public dispatches, if any thing should occur to prevent his writing. The dangers to which he might be exposed, and which had at first so startled her, seemed nothing to the wearying anxiety she had lately suffered ; and even the mention of him in the list of the wounded, she felt would be a relief.

Amy could not entirely enter into all her mother's solicitude, but she loved to hear her talk of Colonel Herbert, and to fancy what he must be like from

the miniature which had been taken before he left England; and she remarked, also, that it was a relief to her mamma to speak of him; and she seldom appeared so cheerful as when she had been either spending half an hour alone in her own chamber, or answering the questions which Amy was never tired of asking. An accidental allusion, indeed, would often bring the tears into Mrs. Herbert's eyes, but a lengthened conversation had a very different effect, for the thought of her husband was associated with all that was excellent and noble; and as she dwelt upon his high character, and the principles with which all the actions of his life were imbued, she could not doubt that the blessing of Heaven would attend him wherever he might be.

The constant pressure of anxiety rendered the presence of strangers in general very painful to Mrs. Herbert; and the only person who was admitted to see her at all times was Mr. Walton. Whatever, therefore, might be the interest felt in her brother's family, she did not regret that the distance from the Hall was likely to prevent any thing like daily intercourse; and Amy, too, was not sorry, for her cousins did not quite please her; and though she had been very much amused by them, she was conscious that only with her mamma could she feel perfectly safe from harm. There was, in consequence, a mixture of alarm and pleasure in her mind upon being told, about three days after her visit to the rectory, that she was to spend the next day at the Hall, going quite early and returning late: and the alarm was not a little increased when her mamma read the postscript of the note:—

“I am anxious that Amy should become acquainted with Miss Morton, and get rid of her fears before she begins taking lessons.”

“What do you say to that, Amy?” asked Mrs.

Herbert. "Do you think you shall be able to go twice a week, sometimes perhaps without me, to learn music and drawing of a stranger?"

"Oh, mamma! indeed I don't know. But when did you settle it? You never told me. Is it really to be so? I don't think I can go without you."

"And I think," said Mrs. Herbert, "that you can and will do every thing that is thought right. Is not that the proper way of looking at it? It does not sound very agreeable at first, but, by and by, you will be sorry when the day comes to stay at home."

"Oh, no, mamma! never. I shall always dislike learning of Miss Morton; my cousins have said so much against her."

"It is rather hard to make up your mind beforehand," said Mrs. Herbert: "you must try and judge for yourself whether she is really every thing they represent; you know it is possible they may be in the wrong."

Amy recollected Margaret's complaint about the picture, and felt that this was quite true, but her prejudice still remained; and when on their arrival at the Hall she was told to find her way by herself to the oriel room, which was now converted into a schoolroom, she hung back in some fear; and though at length obliged to go, it was with reluctant steps; and for several moments she stood with the handle of the door in her hand, unable to summon courage to enter the room alone.

"Who can that be fidgetting at the door?" was exclaimed by some one inside; and Amy in despair opened it.

Dora was seated at the window reading, Margaret was drawing, and Miss Morton writing, with little Rose on a high stool by her side, intensely occupied with a sum in subtraction.

The appearance of the room was totally changed since Amy had last seen it. Books, music, drawings, prints, and work were to be seen in every direction; the old damask chairs had been removed, and lighter ones introduced; the table had been covered with a handsome cloth, and the floor with a new carpet; a cabinet piano had taken the place of the oak chiffonier; and the only thing that Amy fully recognised as an old acquaintance was her aunt Edith's picture, which still hung over the mantel-shelf. Miss Morton came forward to meet her, and shook hands so kindly that Amy's prejudice was for the instant shaken. Margaret overpowered her with kisses; and Dora, in her usual indifferent manner, just spoke, and then again took up her book; while little Rose quite forgot the difficult sum as she sat with her eyes fixed upon her new cousin.

Amy felt very awkward, and as if she had intruded where she had no business; but Miss Morton soon relieved her embarrassment by giving her a portfolio of drawings to look at, and asking some questions about her own occupations, in a voice which sounded more like her mamma's than any she had yet heard at Emmerton.

"You must not mind our being rather silent now," she said at length, when Amy seemed more comfortable, "for Miss Harrington is reading for her mamma; and talking interrupts her."

"Come and sit by me, Amy," said Margaret; "and see how I am getting on with my drawing."

"It would be better not," observed Miss Morton: "whispering is quite as likely to distract your sister's attention as talking out loud."

Margaret did not take any notice of this advice, but made a sign to her cousin to come to the table.

"Not now, Margaret," said Amy; "I shall be quite well amused with these drawings."

A cloud passed over Margaret's very pretty face, and, for the moment, she looked positively ugly, while she muttered, "How unkind! cross thing! I knew she would always interfere."

Amy was vexed, but did not move, and soon became interested in watching Miss Morton's manner to little Rose. It was very quiet and very gentle, but it was quite clear that her will was law; for Rose, whose thoughts had been diverted by the unusual visitor, found great difficulty in finishing her task, and was turned back several times without daring to make a complaint, though a few tears filled her bright hazel eyes when, after three attempts, the sum was again pronounced incorrect. Margaret, forgetting that she had accused Miss Morton of spoiling Rose, and only anxious to prove her in the wrong, cast a look of triumph at Amy, certain that she would agree with her in thinking it very harsh. But Amy, though so young, was quite capable of discovering the difference between firmness and severity, and did not at all dislike Miss Morton for being particular.

"Indeed, you must be quick, Rose," said Miss Morton, as Dora closed her book, and Margaret prepared to put up her drawing: "you see your sisters are ready for dinner; and we are to have it to-day half an hour earlier than usual, that we may walk to Colworth: you would not like to stay at home."

Poor little Rose looked very unhappy, and began counting the figures again; but her haste only made her the more confused. "It is very hard," she said, as she offered the slate again to Miss Morton; "and Amy is here."

Miss Morton smiled, and so sweetly, that it seemed impossible to be afraid of her.

"Well! that is an excuse, I will allow, only it must not be made often; but come and stand by me, and we will do it together."

Rose dried her eyes; and in a very short time the sum was finished, and she went with Miss Morton to get ready for dinner.

"What do you think of her?" asked Dora and Margaret in one breath, almost before Miss Morton was out of the room.

"She seems rather strict," replied Amy; "but I don't think I should be very much afraid of her."

"But do you think she is pretty?" inquired Margaret, eagerly.

"O! yes," answered Amy, "very pretty; prettier than almost any person I ever saw before."

Margaret's lip curled, and in a short contemptuous tone she said, "There is no accounting for taste. To be sure, you have not seen many people in your life; but, for my part, I can't say I like such black beauties."

"Nor white ones either," said Dora. "I never heard you praise a pretty person yet. I don't think Emily Morton such an angel as most people do; but she is twenty times prettier than you are, Margaret, or ever will be."

"That is as others think," said Margaret, casting a self-satisfied look at herself in the glass. "We must go and prepare for dinner now." And she ran out of the room.

Dora was about to follow, but, recollecting her cousin, she stopped, and said, "You will not mind staying here for a few minutes by yourself, shall you, dear, while the servants are bringing the dinner?"

Amy thought she should have preferred going

with her cousins to being alone in the room with the tall men-servants ; but she made no objections, and Dora left her.

During the short interval that elapsed before their return she amused herself by endeavouring to fancy what Emmerton used to be, and comparing it with its present condition ; but she had chosen a difficult task. All was so changed within a few days, that it seemed as if months had gone by since her last visit with her mamma ; and when at last she had succeeded in recollecting exactly the position of the chairs and tables, and the cold desolate look of the oriel room, she was startled from her dream by the voice of the grey-haired butler, who, in a very respectful manner, begged pardon for disturbing her, but wished to know if Miss Harrington were ready for dinner ; and, after such an interruption, a further effort was useless.

Dora sat at the head of the table, though she could not carve, which appeared very strange to Amy ; and she remarked, too, that her cousins addressed Miss Morton by her Christian name, but that she in reply always spoke of Miss Harrington and Miss Margaret : indeed, in every possible way, there seemed to be a determination to show her that she was considered quite an inferior person.

"Will you all walk to Colworth this afternoon?" asked Miss Morton. "Rose and I are going on a little business to Mrs. Saville."

"I thought it was settled," replied Dora : "we said we would at breakfast-time."

"Yes," answered Miss Morton ; "but I fancied I had heard something about a wish of your mamma's that you should go in the carriage with her."

"Oh! for a stupid drive. I believe there was something said ; but I had much rather go to Colworth."

"But what will your mamma wish?" inquired Miss Morton, very gently.

"I can arrange with mamma myself, I hope," was the reply: "I prefer going to Colworth."

"You must allow me to beg that you will mention it to Mrs. Harrington first," said Miss Morton: "she was very much annoyed with me for walking with you yesterday, when she wanted you."

Dora's only answer was, what she considered, a very dignified look: and at this moment a servant entered with a message, desiring that Miss Harrington would be ready to go out with her mamma at three o'clock.

"I know what it is for," exclaimed Dora; "we are to call at Rochford Park: mamma wants me to get acquainted with Miss Cunningham; and I am sure I don't want to know her."

"Is not Lady Rochford a great invalid?" asked Miss Morton, anxious to divert Dora's attention.

"Yes; and that is the reason mamma is going to see her. I believe they were at school together, or something of that kind."

"I have heard it is such a beautiful place," said Amy; "I should so like to see it."

"Then I wish you would go instead of me," replied Dora; "I am sick of beautiful places. What is the use of going six miles to see what you have just as well at home? It is all very natural for people who live in cottages to wish to look at fine houses; but really it is far too much trouble for me."

"It is not merely the seeing fine houses," said Miss Morton, "but the grounds and the scenery may be very different. I should soon get tired of looking at large rooms and gilt furniture; but trees and flowers must always give one pleasure."

"There cannot be any better flowers at Rochford Park than we had at Wayland," persisted Dora:

"every one said the conservatory was the finest in the county."

"Yes," replied Miss Morton; "but now you are at Emmerton, it may be different."

"I never could see any great pleasure in looking at other persons' beautiful things," continued Dora; "and really I don't know what right Lord Rochford has to have any thing better than papa. I heard mamma say yesterday, that our family was much older than his, and yet people make such a fuss about him; and he is going to be an earl soon, and then Miss Cunningham will be lady something."

"Lady Lucy Cunningham," said Margaret. "Morris told me about it this morning, and Bridget told her. I must say I should like to be called lady of all things, should not you, Amy?"

"Yes," answered Amy, "I think, — I am sure I should."

Miss Morton smiled. "It would not make you at all happier, my dear," she said, "because if you cared about it you would be proud and disagreeable, and few persons would love you; and if you did not, you might just as well be Miss Herbert."

"But is there any harm in wishing it," asked Amy.

"We can scarcely help wishing for things," replied Miss Morton; "I mean we can scarcely help the wish coming into our minds: but I think it is wrong not to try and get rid of it, and be contented with the situation in which we are placed."

Amy felt that this was exactly what her mamma would have said, and she began to forget all that had been told her against Miss Morton, and to wish she would go on talking; but it seemed quite an effort to her to say so much, for she spoke in a very low timid voice, and when she had finished, looked

at Dora, as if expecting that something impertinent would follow.

Dora, however, took no notice of her observation, but declared she would rather be Miss Harrington than any thing else. "I heard papa talking to some people the other day," she said; "and he told them he would much prefer being an old country gentleman to a new-made nobleman. And I am sure I agree with him: it must be all pride and nonsense to wish for a title."

Miss Morton roused herself again to speak. "I am afraid," she said, "there is just as much pride, my dear Miss Harrington, in your caring about belonging to an old family, and living in a large house, and having money and servants and carriages, as in considering it a great thing to have a title. Every thing of the kind tempts us to be proud."

"Then it is happy for those who have no such temptation," said Dora, scornfully.

"Yes, indeed, it is," replied Miss Morton, so meekly, and yet so earnestly, that any one less haughty than Dora must have been touched. But Dora was perfectly insensible: she did not, however, continue the subject; and finishing her dinner quickly, saying she had several things to do before three o'clock, without making any apology to Miss Morton, left the room directly the dessert was placed on the table.

Margaret expressed satisfaction at her sister's absence, as she declared it was much more agreeable to her to have her cousin all to herself during their walk: but Amy would willingly have lingered by Miss Morton's side, to hear something of her conversation with Rose.

Margaret, however, insisted upon her keeping at a considerable distance, whilst she again repeated

the history of all she had been accustomed to do at Wayland, adding to it a description of her last new dresses, and the beautiful presents she had received on her birthday, until Amy's curiosity was greatly excited, and once more a feeling of envy arose, as she thought of the difference between herself and her cousin: but she was just beginning to be aware of this fault; and although the wish to have similar presents returned again and again, as Margaret eagerly told over all her treasures, it was accompanied each time by the knowledge that it was wrong; and she felt sorry and vexed with herself, as she remembered how little her mamma would approve of what was passing in her mind. Still the conversation was very amusing, and the time passed so quickly that Amy was quite surprised when she found herself at the lane leading to Colworth parsonage. A girl, whom she immediately recognised as Susan Reynolds, was standing by the shrubby gate; and Amy's first impulse was to speak to her: but she was crying bitterly; and Amy, though longing to know the cause of her tears, was too timid to interrupt her, and without making any remark, followed Miss Morton and her cousins into the house. When, however, the first restraint of the visit had a little diminished, and Mrs. Saville began asking some questions about her mamma, she ventured to inquire whether Susan's mother was worse, and whether this had occasioned her distress.

"Poor Susan has enough to make her unhappy," said Mrs. Saville. "Her mother died last night; and though there is in fact nothing to grieve for, as she was a truly religious person, yet it is a dreadful trial to her children; and Susan is left with the sole charge of her little brothers and sisters: but she is an extremely well-disposed girl, and I hope we shall manage to do something for her by-and-by."

"I believe you have a very good school in the village," said Miss Morton. "Mrs. Harrington is anxious to take a young girl into her service, to be under the lady's maid; and she thought you would excuse her troubling you with asking whether you could recommend one. I rather think several of her best servants were educated at Colworth."

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Saville, "that it will be rather a difficult thing to find one suited to the situation. The girl I should have chosen has just left us, and the others are all too young."

Amy thought of Susan Reynolds, but she did not like to name her. Mrs. Saville, however, did, to her great satisfaction. "I can answer," she said, "for her good principles, cleverness, and sweet temper, though I know nothing of her capabilities in other ways: of course she would have every thing to learn; but I think you would find her very docile. It would be an admirable thing, if you can answer for her being kept strictly under the eye of the lady's maid; for she must do something for herself, as the grandmother, who will take care of the younger children, will find them quite a sufficient charge: and if she should not suit Mrs. Harrington she can return to me at any moment. What she will say to the notion herself, I cannot tell, for just now she is so overpowered with grief that she can think of nothing but her mother. But I will take her to Emmerton in about a week or ten days' time, if Mrs. Harrington would like to see her."

"Do have her," whispered Amy to Miss Morton, feeling extremely anxious that the affair should be settled at once, and, in her eagerness, forgetting her shyness.

"It is not for me to decide, my dear," said Miss

Morton. "I am afraid your aunt will hardly be inclined to have a stranger."

"But she is so good," continued Amy; "and she has such a nice manner."

Miss Morton smiled, and said, that "even these qualifications might not be all that would be required." And then, turning to Mrs. Saville, she added, "If you could bring the little girl to Emmerton, you would, I am sure, confer a favour on Mrs. Harrington, for her time, at present, is very much occupied."

Mrs. Saville willingly agreed to this; and Amy left the parsonage in great delight, having fully settled in her own mind that Susan Reynolds would soon be established at Emmerton, and fancying what a happy change it would be from the miserable hovel in which she had last seen her. She did not know that no earthly comforts could make amends for the loss of her home; and no earthly friend, even if she should find one at Emmerton, could be to her as her mother; for no one can fully understand the blessing of a mother's love till it is taken away for ever.

As they passed the shrubbery gate they perceived Susan standing in the same position in which they had left her, and still crying as if her heart would break.

"Do you think I might speak to her?" asked Amy of Miss Morton. "I should like to tell her how sorry I am about her mother."

Miss Morton hesitated. "Perhaps," she said, "the poor girl would rather not be noticed; but, if you wish it very much, you may just speak, and pass on."

"I should like to do it, if you would go with me," replied Amy. "But I never saw any one so unhappy before."

Emily Morton sighed as she thought of Mrs. Herbert's pale face, and how soon poor Amy might be called to grieve from the same cause; and then, in an instant, a scene which was never entirely banished from her mind came vividly before her, — the darkened chamber, the anxious faces, the tears of overpowering sorrow, which were ever associated in her mind with the recollection of her own mother's death-bed; and, without making any further objection, she followed Amy to the spot where Susan was standing, with a feeling of sympathy which can only be experienced by those who have shared the same grief. Susan was too much absorbed to notice their approach, and Amy scarcely knew what to say; she could only repeat, — "Don't cry so, Susan; I am very sorry for you;" besides asking a few questions about the other children, which Susan was quite unable to answer. But Miss Morton understood better what was to be done. She took the poor girl's hand in hers, and spoke so kindly, that Susan forgot that she was listening to the voice of a stranger: and she said what Amy could not say; she told her that she had suffered the same loss, and therefore knew well how great it was, and that it must seem now as if she never could be happy again: and then she reminded her of her mother's goodness, and that, if she endeavoured to exert herself and do her duty, she would live with her for ever, in a world where there was no more sorrow. And, as she went on, Susan's sobs became fainter and fainter; and at last she was able to thank Miss Morton and Amy for their kindness, and to say that she would try to do what was right: she would do any thing to be with her mother again.

Amy listened, with the hope that she should, one day, be able to talk in the same way, and with an

increased feeling of respect for Miss Morton, which she could not avoid expressing to Margaret when she returned to her. But Margaret was not willing to agree in any praise of which Emily was the object; and only expressed her wonder that Amy could take so much interest in a girl whom she had hardly ever seen before. "As for her being unhappy, she was sorry for it, but she could not help it; and there were a great many people in the world in the same situation. She was not worse off than others; and, in a short time, there was no doubt she would get comfortable again, especially if she went to the Hall to live. And so Margaret remained in contented indifference; and Amy wondered how her cousin could have learned such a strange way of thinking, and determined that she would be the last person to whom she herself would go for comfort in suffering.

Dora returned from her drive soon after they reached home; and was immediately assailed by a host of questions as to what she had done, and whom she had seen, and whether Rochford Park was more beautiful than Wayland. But Dora was not in a communicative mood: she could make herself very agreeable when she chose, and could describe things in a very amusing manner; but this day her whim was to be silent; and all the information obtained was, that Rochford Park was a very good sort of place, that Miss Cunningham was like the rest of the world, only not so tall as she was, and that Lord Rochford talked of bringing her over to Emmerton soon, to spend the day, and then they would be able to judge for themselves.

"How stupid you are, Dora!" said Margaret, when this most unsatisfactory account had been given. "I thought you would entertain us all by

telling us what you had seen ; but you might just as well have stayed at home."

"I am sure I wish I had," replied Dora : "it was very hot and very dusty, and I am very tired ; so, now, I hope we shall have tea as soon as possible. Do, Emily, look into Morris's room, when you go up stairs, and tell her I am waiting to be dressed."

"Can't I go ?" asked Amy, feeling instantly that the request was not a proper one.

Dora stared. She was not accustomed to see any one put themselves out of their way to help another ; and she was conscious that Amy's offer was almost a reproach to her, for there were times when she was aware of her want of consideration for Miss Morton. "It will be no trouble," she said ; "Emily has done it a hundred times before."

"I would rather go," persisted Amy ; "I know very well where the room is." And, without waiting for an answer, she ran up stairs.

"It may be very good-natured," muttered Dora to Margaret ; "but I don't see why she should interfere." And, with a pouting lip and her usual scornful toss of the head, she followed her cousin.

The rest of the evening was not agreeable to Amy, for Dora's ill-humour exhibited itself very plainly ; and neither Emily Morton's kindness nor Margaret's kisses could make her forget that one of the party was discontented ; and she was not sorry when her mamma appeared in the schoolroom, prepared to return home. Mrs. Harrington accompanied her in a more gracious mood than ordinary ; she even patted Amy on the shoulder, and called her "dear : " but the next moment the harshness of her voice, as she remarked something that was amiss in Margaret's manner, recalled all Amy's fears, and she shrank away from her aunt with a feeling of even greater awe than at their first meeting.

CHAP. VII.

AFTER this visit Amy's prejudice against Miss Morton considerably decreased; and she made no objection, when the arrangement was finally made, that she should go to Emmerton twice a week to receive drawing and music lessons. For many reasons it was a great pleasure, as she was amused by her cousins when they were in good humour, and the novelty and variety had always charms; besides which, Mr. Harrington made her a present of a donkey, to carry her backwards and forwards when it was not convenient for the carriage to be sent; and a ride through the forest, with the man-servant walking by her, in the lovely summer mornings, compensated for any disagreeables in the remainder of the day. She usually returned to the cottage soon after the early dinner in the schoolroom, and some of the party often walked back part of the way with her; or if she were quite alone, old Stephen generally contrived to hobble for about a mile by her side, giving her the history of all the cows, horses, dogs, and sheep about the place, almost all of whom were Amy's old acquaintances, though she saw little of them now that her time at the Hall was so differently occupied. And so the bright months of summer passed away, and Amy became accustomed to the great change in her life, and began to wonder how she could have liked the house in its former desolate state, and to associate with the old trees in the park and the lovely walks over the downs, thoughts of rambles with her cousins, or con-

versations with Emily Morton (whom she soon felt inclined to love as she became more acquainted with her character), instead of the old-fashioned ladies and gentlemen with whom she had formerly been accustomed to people the Hall and every place about it.

In one thing alone was there no change. The chapel still remained unopened from week to week, apparently forgotten, except when visitors were in the house, and it was exhibited as a show, for the purpose of passing away a few idle moments. The rich light streamed through the painted glass of the east window, and chequered the marble floor and shone upon the grotesque oak carving; but there was no one to admire its radiance. The splendidly-bound Bible lay uncared for upon the desk; the family prayer-books, moth-eaten and decayed, were piled upon the seats; and the only thing which bore the semblance of devotion in the place, once hallowed by daily prayer, was the marble figure of the first lord of Emmerton, who, stretched upon his tomb, with his clasped hands raised to heaven, seemed silently to reproach all who entered with their forgetfulness of the privilege he had so highly valued. Amy could not feel this neglect of the chapel as keenly as her mother, for she could not remember the time when it was otherwise; but she could feel the disappointment of her curiosity to see it as it had been described to her; and something told her that it must be wrong to think so lightly of it, and entirely to omit the practice of daily family prayer, even if circumstances interfered with the performance of the regularly appointed service: and at last she became quite shy of talking about it; and, when she knew the chapel was open, she would steal into it by herself and indulge some of her former reveries, and then return to the schoolroom without venturing to mention what she had been doing.

This was one among many instances in which the difference of education between Amy and her cousins was easily to be discovered. With all Amy's occupations and all her pleasures her mother had carefully endeavoured to blend ideas which might improve and raise her mind. She had taught her that the days of her childhood were the most important of her life, for they were those in which habits must be formed either for good or evil, which would be her blessing or her curse for ever. She had told her of the first sinful nature which she brought with her into the world at her birth, and of the second holy nature which had been given her at baptism, and had warned her that the whole of her life would be a struggle between the two — a struggle which was begun from the very first moment of her becoming sensible of the difference between right and wrong. And thus Amy had learnt to look upon what are often considered trifling faults in a child — ill-temper, indolence, vanity, greediness, and similar evil dispositions — as real sins in the eye of God, which must be checked at the very beginning by all who wish to continue what they were made at their baptism — his children. She did not think, with her cousins, that it signified little what she did as a child, for that the time would, of course, arrive when she should be able at once to become good ; but in the little every-day trials, to which she was now exposed more frequently than ever, she endeavoured to conquer any irritation of temper, or inclination to indolence, or envy ; and every day the task became less difficult. Perhaps this kind of education had caused her to be more thoughtful than is usual at her age, and made her pleasures of a graver and quieter cast ; but in reality it added to her happiness far more than it apparently took away. It made her love the blue sky, and the trees and

flowers, not merely for their beauty; but because she knew they were especial blessings sent to her; and that every day's enjoyment of them was provided for her by God, in the same way as her mother provided for her pleasure in other things. It made her sensible of the holiness of those places which were especially dedicated to the worship of God: and the silence of the beautiful chapel at Emmerton had as great a charm for her as the gay scenes which her cousins often described had for them; and, above all, it gave her that quietness and cheerfulness of mind which only those can possess who really try in every thing to do what they know to be their duty. But the same education which had made Amy think so differently from her cousins made her also feel that they could not sympathize with her; and thus, though Emmerton was a source of constant amusement, it was principally because at the time she was enjoying it she could look forward to the evening, when she should return to her mother, and give her an account of what she had been doing. Her walks, her books, her music, her drawing — all would have ceased to charm without this; but with it, even Dora's petulance and Margaret's selfishness caused only a momentary annoyance. Whatever discomfort she might find at the Hall, there was always a bright smile and a fond kiss awaiting her at the cottage; and the enjoyment of her mother's love there was nothing to mar. For Amy did not notice what a stranger would have looked on with fear; she did not see the increasing paleness of Mrs. Herbert's complexion, the hectic flush upon her cheek, the transparency of her delicate hands; the change was so gradual as to be in general unobserved, or, if remarked by other persons, there was always some reason to be given for it, — either the heat, or a bad night, or the disappointment of not hearing from

India; the last being, in fact, the real cause of the evil.

During this time Mrs. Herbert watched her child most anxiously, to discover the effect which the intimacy with her cousins might produce upon her mind, but she saw little to make her uneasy; for however Amy might enjoy the grandeur of Emmerton, she seldom expressed any wish to possess it; and day after day, and week after week, she returned to her quiet home with the same gentle, humble, open spirit with which she had left it. But still her mother was not quite satisfied. She knew that while Amy had no rivals the strength of the temptation was but slight. She went as a visitor, and to a certain degree a stranger; and her cousins were pleased to see her, and in general her wishes were consulted: but Mrs. Herbert looked forward to the time when she might be obliged to live at Emmerton altogether, perhaps as a dependant, certainly as a person quite inferior to Mr. Harrington's daughters; and she could not but fear lest Amy might then be sensible of a false pride of which she was now unconscious. Yet, although the constant communication between the Hall and the cottage had had little effect upon Amy, it was not entirely so with her cousins. Margaret's character, indeed, was not one to be easily improved, for her extreme vanity prevented her being in the least alive to her own faults or to the virtues of others. She remarked that Amy was seldom or never selfish; but she only liked her for it because it gratified her own indolence and self-will: it never entered her head that in this her cousin was her superior, and that therefore she ought to imitate her; and as for her sincerity and humility, it required a much purer mind than Margaret's to understand why such qualities were good. If Amy's praises were sounded by Emily Morton,

Margaret would seize upon some trifling occasion in which they might have differed, or some passing hasty expression, to prove that every one was mistaken in their opinion of her, and that she was no better than others; whilst the next moment, if her cousin entered, she would try her patience and her good-nature, perhaps, by sending her to a distant part of the house for a book, or begging her to finish some tiresome piece of work, and then think she had made quite sufficient amends for the trouble, by covering her with kisses, asking her if she did not love her dearly, and declaring she was the most good-natured little thing in the world. At first Amy did not understand this; she thought Margaret affectionate, and Dora cold; and she turned from the one and clung to the other; but this could not last long, for Margaret's selfishness was too great to be concealed by any show of warmth, and after a little time she wondered why she should be so uncomfortable when Margaret put her arm so kindly round her neck, and asked her to do the very thing she knew was most disagreeable to her, and why she should be annoyed when she chose the most beautiful flowers or the finest fruit for herself, and then said, "You won't mind, will you, darling?" It seemed almost wrong, yet Amy could not help the feeling. With Dora, however, it was very different; she had serious faults, and they were so evident as to be perceived even upon a first acquaintance; but she had also qualities upon which a very superior character might be formed, and amongst them, perhaps, the most valuable was sincerity. Whatever she said was strictly true; there was no pretence of affection which was not felt, no affectation of virtues which were not possessed: she was too reserved to express all her feelings, but those she did express were perfectly real; she was too proud to confess herself in

the wrong of her own accord, but she would never for a moment stoop to the slightest meanness to screen herself; and this it was which formed the connecting link between her and Amy, for it was the one thing to which Dora was peculiarly alive, and half her quarrels with Margaret, when they were not caused by opposition to her will, arose from her perceiving some little cunning; or paltry motive, which her sister tried to conceal but could not. If Amy had not been true and candid, Dora would have cared little for her other qualities; but when once she discovered that her cousin's lightest word was to be depended on, and that she never hesitated to acknowledge an error, whatever might be the consequence, she began to respect her, and to remark the other points in which she was superior; and though she would hardly have borne a rebuke for her ill temper or her pride, even from her father, she would think over some instance in which Amy had shown self-command or humility, with a feeling of self-reproach she had seldom known before. And thus, quite unconsciously, Amy was exercising an influence for good, over the mind of a person older and cleverer than herself, merely by the quiet unobtrusive manner in which she performed her daily duties. But as yet this made no difference in Dora's manner; she was still proud and irritable, and often most unkind at the very moment she was feeling the greatest respect, and Amy's chief pleasure at Emmerton soon arose from being with Emily Morton and little Rose. Rose, indeed, was not much of a companion; but she was a very interesting and beautiful child, and Emily Morton's great love for her was in itself quite sufficient to make her a source of pleasure to Amy. At first, when the music and drawing lessons began, Amy's hand shook and her voice almost trembled whenever Miss Morton found

AMY HERBERT.

fault with her; but she soon discovered there not the slightest occasion for fear, since even Margaret's inattention only gave rise to a serious and a hope, expressed in a grave tone, that please her mamma, she would be more careful for future. And when the awe had subsided, Amy began to look forward to Miss Morton's approbation, when vexed at her cousin's neglect, she endeavoured to make some amends by bringing her the prettiest flowers from her own garden or working some thing which she thought might gratify her. Emily, touched by attentions she had lately been little accustomed to receive, anticipated Amy's as one of the chief enjoyments of her lonely and bestowed upon her a considerable portion of affection which had once been exclusively given to little Rose.

It was some time, however, before Amy discovered that Miss Morton was indeed fond of her; she was very gentle and very kind, but this she hid to every one, and her extreme reserve and prevented the expression of her real feelings. Besides they were very seldom alone, and Dora and Margaret were in the room, Emily to shrink into herself, and never to speak when absolutely obliged. From her childhood Emily Morton had had a peculiar dread of the scorn or ridicule, a dread which her friends had often vainly endeavoured to remove until her sense of religion had taught her wrong it was to indulge it, and even then of the feeling remained. The careless and any little awkwardness, or the thoughtless forgotten when others were noticed, brought the tears into her eyes which caused as keen a pang as she grew wh

her self-command prevented its being shown; and the suffering she had undergone from the moment of her entrance into Mr. Harrington's family, it would be difficult to describe. At school she had always felt herself on an equality with her young companions, and in general, from her accomplishments, their superior; but at Wayland Court every one looked down upon her. Mr. Harrington scarcely thought of her at all; and Mrs. Harrington considered her as little above the level of an upper servant, useful in a party to sing and play, and useful in teaching Dora and Margaret to do the same, but in other respects very slightly differing from Morris. Dora scorned her, as inferior in rank and wealth, and disliked her because on certain occasions she was bound to obey her; and Margaret envied her beauty, and was angry with her straightforward simplicity; and when all this was gradually discovered, the feeling that arose in Emily Morton's mind was most bitter. Every trifling neglect, every proud look, every taunting word, brought the colour to her cheek, and a host of painful recollections to her mind; and though too gentle to retaliate, she thought over them in private till they seemed almost unendurable, and she was often on the point of leaving Mr. Harrington's house and seeking for another situation. But there was a principle within that soon brought her to a more patient spirit. She had been placed at Wayland by the only friend on whom she could depend, and to leave it would be, she knew, a cause of great anxiety, and the "charity which beareth all things," at length enabled her to submit to the trial without a murmur. She learnt not only to listen without reply to undeserved reproofs, but to ask herself whether there might not even be some ground for them; she learnt to return the greatest neglect with the most thought-

ful attention ; the harshest speeches with the most considerate kindness ; till the calmness of her own mind became a sufficient recompense for all her difficulties : and the person most to be envied in the family of a man who had thousands at his disposal, worldly rank, the respect of his friends, and the applause of his dependants, was the young girl whom even the very servants considered themselves privileged to mention with contempt.

Emily Morton's situation, however, would have been very different but for little Rose. She was the one charm of her life, the only thing that seemed yet left her in which to take a deep and affectionate interest ; and till her arrival at Emmerton, Rose was the one subject of her daily thoughts. It was long before she could believe that Amy was indeed so different from her cousins ; and still longer ere her habitual shyness could be so far overcome as to enable her to talk, except at the times of the regular lessons. The constant impression on her mind was, that every one was ridiculing her ; and this made her so unwilling to speak unless when obliged, that Amy often feared she never should be at ease with her. The reserve between them would probably have continued for even a greater length of time, had it not been for the introduction of Susan Reynolds into the place of under lady's maid soon after the walk to Colworth. Mrs. Harrington was pleased with her appearance, and still more with Mrs. Saville's recommendation ; and although Bridget looked sulky at first, because she was not consulted on the occasion, and old Stephen grumbled in private, because his little grand-daughter had not been chosen, no other person in the house found fault with the arrangement ; and even Morris, the quickest, neatest, and most particular of her particular race, declared she

had never met with so clever and well-behaved a girl for her age.

This was joyful news to Amy, who, of course, fancied that now all Susan's troubles were at an end ; for every one said it was the most fortunate thing in the world that she had found so good a situation ; but when several weeks had passed, and her eyes were still often filled with tears, and her voice had the same melancholy resigned tone as at first, Amy became half vexed, and, perhaps, a little impatient. It seemed almost like ingratitude, and she ventured one day to ask Emily Morton a few questions on the subject, as Susan's principal employment was to wait upon her and Rose, and therefore she must know more about her than any one else. Miss Morton spoke so kindly, and took such an interest in the poor orphan girl, that it was impossible not to be at ease when talking on this one thing at least : and Amy's heart was at length completely won, when she met Susan one afternoon on the stairs leading to Miss Morton's room, which was in a little turret close to the schoolroom ; and on inquiring what made her look so much more cheerful than usual, found that Emily had made her a present of a new book, and had promised, if possible, to hear her read three times a week.

"She is so good to me, Miss Herbert," said Susan ; "it almost makes me happy."

"Oh ! but, Susan," said Amy ; "I wish you could be quite happy. I thought you would when you came here, and had such a comfortable home."

"It is not my home, miss," replied Susan ; "grandmother's cottage is my home now."

"And do you want to go back there?" asked Amy, looking very disappointed.

"Oh no ! miss, I should only be a burthen, and I

know it would not be right; but I should like very much to see her and the children."

"But would you rather live there?" repeated Amy.

"I would rather live with my friends any where, miss, than amongst strangers."

Poor Amy felt heartily vexed. "But you know, Susan," she said, "you could not expect to have such nice dinners with your grandmother, or such a comfortable bed, or to wear such good clothes as you do here."

"Ah! miss, but it is not the eating and drinking, and the clothes, that make one happy," replied Susan.

At this moment Margaret called her cousin to the schoolroom, and the conversation was interrupted; but Amy could not help thinking of it afterwards, and talking of it to her mamma when she went home.

"It seems very strange, mamma," she said, "that Susan should care so little for having such a comfortable place to live in."

"Should you be happy, Amy, at Emmerton, without me?"

"O no! mamma, never: but then ——"

"But what, my dear child?"

"I am afraid it is wrong, mamma; but I think sometimes that it would be very nice to have a carriage and servants, and a large house; and it must be almost as great a change to Susan to have so many comforts as she has now."

"The reason why you think so differently, my love, is, that you have never known yet what real unhappiness means. When that time comes, you will feel with Susan, that all such things are of no consequence. I believe God often sends afflictions to teach us this."

"And do you think He will send them to me, mamma?" said Amy, anxiously.

"I believe He will send you whatever is necessary to make you good, my dear, and will give you strength to bear it; but it will be better and happier for you if you endeavour to overcome this longing for riches and grandeur now, and so, perhaps, the trial may not be required."

Amy did not quite understand all that her mother meant, or why she should look so sad; but she went to rest that night with a heavier heart than usual, even though she had made it an especial part of her evening prayers that God would grant her a humble spirit, and teach her not to desire any thing beyond what He had given: and when she next went to Emmerton she looked upon Susan as much better than herself, and took even a greater interest in her; and finding that Miss Morton did the same, and studied in many little ways to make the poor girl feel less friendless and lonely, it seemed as if the barrier between herself and Emily was in a measure done away; and she began from this time to experience a pleasure in being with her, which once she would have imagined impossible.

CHAP. VIII.

"MAMMA," said Amy, as she returned from Emmerton one bright afternoon in the beginning of September, "aunt Harrington hopes that when I go to the Hall, on Thursday, you will go with me; for Lord Rochford is coming over with Miss Cunningham, and she thinks you would like to see them. The carriage will be sent for you whenever you wish it."

"Has not Miss Cunningham been at the Hall before?" asked Mrs. Herbert.

"No," replied Amy; "she was to have gone there just after my aunt came, but one of her uncles was taken ill and died, and then she went away somewhere on a visit. I want to see her very much, for I am sure my aunt is very anxious that Dora should be with her a great deal."

"How did you guess that?" asked Mrs. Herbert.

"Oh, by the way in which she talked of her, and said she hoped Dora would make herself agreeable, and that there were very few young people of the same age here, and that the acquaintance was very desirable; but mamma," continued Amy, looking up archly in her mother's face, "I think Dora is determined not to like her."

"And why should you think so?"

"Because I am sure Dora never does like any one she is told to like. She always has a fancy for things which no one else can endure, and she will pet that ugly tabby cat which you saw in the school-room the other day; and that great fierce dog, which

growls whenever any one goes near it, though I think she is a little afraid of it."

"And does her love for human beings go by contraries too?"

"I don't know quite, because I have never seen her with strangers," said Amy; "but I am sure it is her way in other things, for even in her dress I can see it. She generally chooses to wear whatever Margaret or I think ugly. But, mamma, have you ever seen Miss Cunningham, and do you think I shall like her?"

"I saw her frequently when she was a very little child," replied Mrs. Herbert; "for before your uncle went to Wayland Lady Rochford was very intimate with your aunt: but after that she became ill, and I had no carriage, and the distance between us is so great, that we have very seldom met, though I have been asked occasionally to stay there, and once, when your dear papa was here, I went."

"Then you will like to go with me on Thursday, mamma," said Amy; "you know it will make me so happy, and you never go now, as you used to do in the summer. You always say it is such a fatigue; but I did so enjoy the nice long days, when you were with me."

"I must wait till Thursday comes before I decide," answered her mother. "The postman shall take a note for me to Emmerton early, to say whether we shall want the carriage."

Amy watched her mamma more anxiously than usual, the next day, and was not quite satisfied with her pale and languid looks; and when she appeared at breakfast the following morning, evidently suffering from the effects of a sleepless night, it was clear that she was more fit to stay at home than to spend the day at Emmerton; and, much to Amy's disappointment, the donkey was ordered at eleven

o'clock, and she was obliged to set off for her ride by herself.

There were preparations in the schoolroom for a day of idleness. Rose was playing with her doll, Margaret engaged with some fancy work for herself, and Dora deep in the contents of an amusing book, while Miss Morton, relieved from her usual duties, had gone to her own room to enjoy quietness and solitude.

"I don't think I like coming here on a holiday," observed Amy, when she entered the room; "it does not seem natural."

"I like it, though," said Rose, as she tied a pink ribbon round her doll's waist in a firm hard knot, and then held it up to be admired. "I never have my doll's new frock except on holidays; and Emily is coming presently to have a good game of play."

"You won't play here," exclaimed Margaret, sharply; "we can have no litter made."

"I don't want to make a litter," said Rose; "and I had much rather go and play in Emily's room, she is, never cross."

"O Rose!" said a gentle voice behind her; and Rose was immediately sensible that she had been wrong; and turning round to Emily, who had just come into the room, she jumped upon a chair to kiss her, and whispered, "I won't be naughty; but no one is kind except you."

"You must not speak so," replied Emily; "and your sister is quite right in saying it will not do to make a litter here; but there is plenty of space in my bedroom, and we will go there and play when I have just spoken to your cousin."

"And won't Amy come too?" said Rose.

Amy looked half inclined; but Margaret vehemently asserted that such a thing had never been heard of before; and Dora raised her head from

her book, begging more earnestly than was her wont that Amy would stay with them: and so Miss Morton and Rose departed with the doll and her treasures, and Amy remained to wile away the time as she best could till Miss Cunningham arrived. Not that this was a difficult task, for there were many books at hand which were quite new to her; and she was so unwearied a reader that, although her cousins did not take the least trouble to entertain her, the time seemed very short till the sound of carriage wheels and the loud ringing of the door bell announced the arrival of a visiter. Margaret hastily gathered up her fragments of silk and beads and thrust them into the first open drawer she could find (a proceeding which Amy did not fail to remark, as she knew that the task of finding Margaret's missing treasures always devolved upon her); but Dora did not appear to observe what was passing till her sister stealthily opened the door and peeped into the passage, and then she called out to her to shut it, and wondered she was not ashamed of being so unladylike. Margaret was not at all inclined to obey, and a dispute would probably have been the consequence but for the entrance of the footman, who came with Mrs. Harrington's orders that the young ladies should go immediately to the drawing-room. Margaret ran to the glass to arrange her curls; and Dora, lingering over her book, reluctantly prepared to do as she was told, always a difficult task with her, and particularly so at that moment.

"I suppose my aunt wishes me to go too," said Amy.

"My mistress only mentioned Miss Harrington and Miss Margaret," replied the man, very respectfully, but decidedly; for he well knew that Mrs. Harrington always required her commands to be taken literally.

Amy shrank back, vexed with herself for having offered to go, and more vexed with her aunt for having omitted to send for her. It would have made her feel shy to be obliged to encounter strangers; but it was not pleasant to be left behind.

"Never mind, dear," said Dora, kindly, seeing her blank face of disappointment; "we shall be back again presently, and then you shall see Miss Cunningham; but I tell you, she is just like the rest of the world."

"I don't know why I should care," replied Amy, recovering herself; "it will be much more agreeable to stay here and read, for I am not used to strangers as you are, Dora."

And yet, though it was more agreeable, Amy was not contented; and when Margaret, having arranged her longest ringlet to her satisfaction, and set her dress to rights, and drawn up her head so as to show off her long neck to advantage, pronounced herself quite ready, and left Amy to the quiet enjoyment of her book, she could not manage to fix her attention upon it. For the first time since her uncle's arrival at Emmerton she felt neglected: it had often happened before that Dora or Margaret had been sent for on some little business with their mamma, but then it did not signify; and the few visitors who called seldom inquired for them; or if they saw them accidentally, there was always as much notice taken of Amy as of her cousins, so that she had not fancied there could be any distinction between them; and even now she hardly acknowledged to herself the cause of her uncomfortable feelings, but sat with the open book before her, trying to find out why her aunt had wished her to be left behind; and then looking at the loveliness of the grounds and the signs of wealth and luxury in the room, and contrasting them with the plainly

furnished drawing-room and the little garden at the cottage. "I should be very happy if mamma had such beautiful things" was the thought that arose in her mind, but there was something within that checked it. They only who have tried earnestly to do right, can tell how quickly conscience whispers when we are wrong, and Amy, young as she was, had too often heard her mother's warnings against envy and covetousness, not to be aware that she was at that moment tempted by them, and half repeating to herself "how wrong it is in me!" she turned to her book, with the resolution of not thinking any thing more about the matter. She had read but a few pages when the sound of voices in the passage interrupted her. Dora's constrained tone, and Margaret's affected laugh, told directly there was a stranger with them, and immediately afterwards they entered with Miss Cunningham, and the first glance showed Amy that Dora's description had been very correct. She was neither tall nor short, neither stout nor thin; she had greyish-blue eyes, without any particular expression in them, sandy coloured hair, a fair freckled complexion, and rather pretty mouth, and certainly was very unlike what Amy had fancied in all but her dress, which was peculiarly handsome.

"This is our schoolroom," said Dora, when Miss Cunningham, upon being told who Amy was, had shaken hands with her, and scanned her from head to foot.

"Is it?" was the reply. "It is a nice little place: I think it must be just the size of my governess's sitting-room."

"It does very well," said Dora; "but it is nothing like the room we had to ourselves at Wayland, which was twice as large."

"My governess's room," continued Miss Cun-

ningham, "used to be my nursery ; and then, when I grew too old for it, of course papa gave up another to me ; in fact, I have two I may call my own now, a little room, where I keep all my books, and a large one, where I do my lessons."

"There was a whole set of rooms which was to have been ours," said Dora, "if we had remained at Wayland ; and here, I suppose, something of the kind will be arranged for us soon, but every thing is so unsettled yet that papa has not had time to think about it."

"My little room," observed Miss Cunningham, "looks out upon the finest view in the whole estate. I can see a distance of twenty miles from the window."

"The tower on Thorwood hill was thirty miles off, I think, Margaret," said Dora, turning to her sister.

"Yes," she replied ; "but, then, it could only be seen as a little speck on a clear day."

Miss Cunningham went to the window. "You have no view here," she said.

"No," answered Dora ; "it is much pleasanter having it shut in in this way, because it makes it so private."

"But when a house stands high, it is very easy to be private, and yet to have beautiful views between the trees."

"I suppose," said Dora, "that when this house was built, several hundred years ago, people did not think so much about scenery, though, indeed, there is a very nice view from the front. I have heard papa say that it is only modern places which stand high. Rochford Park, I think, is about fifty years old?"

"Only the new part ; there is one wing which is much older."

But the new part was built when your family first went there, was it not?"

Yes; it was built by my grandfather, when he returned from being ambassador to Turkey."

"I think the newest part of Emmerton has been built at least a hundred and fifty years," said Dora; "and the old part—I really cannot say exactly what the age of it is; but the first baron who is buried in the chapel died somewhere about 1470, and his was the elder branch of our family."

"But there is no title in your family now," observed Miss Cunningham.

"Indeed, there is," replied Dora: "Lord Doringford is a cousin of ours."

"Oh! a hundredth cousin, I suppose. Any one may be that; for you know we are all descended from Adam."

"Yes; and, of course, that is the reason why people think so much more of a family being an old one, than of a mere title."

Miss Cunningham turned sharply round to Amy.

"Do you live here?" she asked: and at being addressed so unceremoniously, Amy's colour rose, but she tried to answer gently, though she felt a little unwilling to acknowledge that her home was neither a park nor a hall."

"I live about two miles off," she said, "at Emmerton Cottage; but I am here a great deal."

"Oh!" was all the reply; and Amy took up a book, and wished the new visitor had remained at Rochford Park.

"Is not that a very pretty drawing?" said Margaret, finding Dora unwilling to speak again, and feeling very awkward. It was a drawing of Miss Morton's, which she was going to copy.

"Very," replied Miss Cunningham shortly. "My

style is flowers: I learnt when I was in Paris, and ——”

“But that does not make this drawing pretty or ugly, does it?” interrupted Dora, with a curl of the lip which portended a storm.

Miss Cunningham stared at her, and then went on with her sentence: “And my master told papa that my copies were almost equal to the original.”

“I should like to see them very much,” said Margaret, wishing, as usual to conciliate her last acquaintance. “Will you bring them over to show us some day?”

“Dora held up a lovely rose, almost the last of the season: “Look,” she said; “who would not rather have that, than the most beautiful drawing that ever could be made of it?”

No notice was taken of the question; for by this time Miss Cunningham felt that she was no match for Dora in any thing but pretension; and her only resource was indifference. She, therefore, went on talking to Margaret, who proved herself a willing listener. Drawings, music, lessons, dress, all were mentioned in turn; and Margaret patiently bore the perpetual repetition of “I think this,” and “I do that,” as she looked at Miss Cunningham’s sandy hair and freckled complexion, and felt that in one thing, at least, there could be no comparison between them. Amy for some time stood by, one moment casting a wistful look at her book, and wishing that it were not rude to read, or that she might carry it off to Miss Morton’s room, and the next, feeling a strong inclination to laugh, as she listened to what was passing. She had never heard any thing of the kind before; for Dora did not boast except when she wished to rival some one, and Amy was far too humble to enter into competition with her in any thing.

At length, even the delightful subject of self seemed to be exhausted. The visitor paused; and Margaret, looking at the time-piece, and remarking that it wanted nearly an hour to dinner, proposed that they should go into the garden.

"Is there any thing to be seen there?" asked Miss Cunningham.

"Nothing that *you* will admire," replied Dora, sarcastically.

But the emphasis on the *you* was quite lost. From her childhood, Miss Cunningham could never be made to understand what was not expressed in plain words.

"I suppose," she said, rather condescendingly, "you think we have such a beautiful place at the park, that I shall not care about this."

"Oh! no," answered Dora, "such an idea never entered my head; for it struck me when I was there the other day, that it was so like all the other gentlemen's seats I have ever seen, that you would be quite glad to look at something different. There is hardly such another place as Emmerton, I believe in England."

The meaning of this was certainly quite evident, but Miss Cunningham was not quick at a retort; she could only stare, as she usually did when she had not words at command, and ask Margaret to show her the way into the garden. Dora begged to be excused accompanying them, and Amy would willingly have done the same, but for the fear of appearing rude; and even in such trifles she had learned already to consult the feelings of others.

The morning was so lovely, uniting almost the warmth of summer with the freshness of autumn, that the mere sensation of being in the open air was enjoyable; and it was fortunate for Amy that it was so, as neither of her companions paid any

attention to her. Margaret led the way, through the winding walks in the shrubbery, and along the terrace, and by the side of the lake; pointing out the different objects which were to be seen, expressing herself extremely delighted at having Miss Cunningham with her, and hoping that they should meet very often, for really there were no people living near Emmerton, and it was dreadfully dull after Wayland; forgetting that only the day before, in one of her fits of extreme affection, she had told Amy, they did not regret Wayland in the least, for that being with her, made up for every thing. Amy, however, did not forget; and it made her doubt, as she had often been inclined to do before, whether her cousin was not sometimes insincere. It was quite possible that Margaret might find Emmerton dull, and there was no harm in her saying so, but there was no occasion to make kind speeches if she did not mean them; and almost involuntarily she turned away, and walked a few paces behind by herself. Miss Cunningham looked at every thing that was pointed out, and once or twice said it was pretty; but the chief charm of all consisted in its being like something else which was more beautiful at Rochford Park. The trees were taller, the lake was clearer, the walks were broader, and Amy, as she listened, sometimes forgot her annoyance in amusement, though Margaret's words continually reminded her of it again; and by the time they had gone over the pleasure grounds, she thought that her society would not have been missed if she had remained in the house. Suddenly, however, as they seated themselves on a bench by the side of the lake, Margaret seemed to recollect that her cousin was present; and with a half-suppressed yawn, asked her if she could think of any thing else they could do before dinner. It

was evident that she was tired of her company, and Amy ransacked her brain to discover something else which might be seen.

"I think we have gone over every thing except the chapel," she said.

"Oh! yes, the chapel," exclaimed Margaret, "that will just do; I am sure Miss Cunningham would like to see it."

"I don't know, indeed," was the reply. "Is it far? I am dreadfully tired."

"It is a part of the house," said Amy, "and you know we must get home. This is the shortest way to it, Margaret," she continued, pointing to a dark overgrown walk: "you know it leads over the wooden bridge to the private garden, without our being obliged to go to the front of the house."

"The shortest way is the best," muttered Miss Cunningham; "I hate being walked to death."

Amy thought it would have been more civil to have kept her remarks to herself; but she supposed the observation was not intended to be heard, and they went on, Miss Cunningham complaining the whole way either of the narrowness of the path, or the inconvenience of the briers, or the heat of the sun, and making both Margaret and Amy very much repent having her with them.

The walk, however, did at last come to an end; and as they turned a sharp angle of the building, and came suddenly upon the chapel, with its grey buttresses half covered with ivy, standing out upon a smooth square of velvet turf, and concealed from the pleasure ground by a thick shrubbery and one or two splendid chestnut trees. Amy forgot how unlike her companions were to herself, and involuntarily exclaimed, "Is it not beautiful!"

"How odd!" said Miss Cunningham; "why it is a church."

"It is very gloomy," observed Margaret: "I don't often come here."

"Not gloomy," said Amy, "only grave."

"Well! grave or gloomy, it is all the same. I wish, Amy, you would learn not to take up one's words so. And now we are come here, I don't think we can get in. You should have remembered that this door is always locked: do run into the house, and ask Bridget for the key, and we will wait here."

Amy instantly did as she was desired, but had not gone ten yards before she returned. "You know, Margaret," she said, "that I cannot see Bridget, because I must not go amongst the servants. I never have been since the first night you came, when my aunt was so angry with me."

"But," replied Margaret, "mamma is engaged with Lord Rochford now; you will be sure not to meet her."

"It is not the meeting her, but the doing what she would not like, that I am afraid of; but it will do, perhaps, if I ring the bell in the schoolroom, and then I can ask for it."

"Yes; only run off and be quick, for we have not much time to spare."

And in a moment Amy disappeared; and with the best speed she could make, found her way to the school room, and seizing the bell-rope, without remembering how easily it rang, gave it such a pull that the sound was heard through the whole house. The last tone had but just died away when another was heard, to Amy's ear much more awful. It was her aunt's harsh voice in the passage, exclaiming against such a noise being made, and declaring that Dora or Margaret, whichever it was, should be severely reprimanded. Poor Amy actually trembled, and stood with the bell-rope in her hand, unable to move, when Mrs. Harrington entered.

"What Amy! Amy Herbert! A most extraordinary liberty I must say! I must beg you to recollect that you are not at home. Pray did any one give you permission to ring?"

Amy could hardly say "Yes," because it was her own proposition; but she stammered out "that Margaret wanted the key of the chapel, and she did not like to go amongst the servants, for fear of displeasing her aunt."

"Then Margaret should have come herself to ask for what she wants; I will have no one but my own family ringing the bell and giving orders in my house. And such a noise!" continued Mrs. Harrington, her anger increasing as she remembered how her nerves had been affected by the loud peal.

Amy could only look humble and distressed; and forgetting the key and every thing but her desire to escape from her aunt, she moved as quickly towards the door as she dared. But she had scarcely reached it when a second fright awaited her: a grasp, which seemed almost like that of a giant, stopped her, and the quick, good humoured voice of a stranger exclaimed, "Why, what's the matter? Who have we got here—a third daughter, Mrs. Harrington?"

Amy ventured to look in the face of the speaker, and felt reassured by the kind, open countenance that met her view. She guessed in an instant it must be Lord Rochford.

"Not a daughter," replied Mrs. Harrington, in a constrained voice; "Mr. Harrington's niece, Amy Herbert."

"Ah! well," said Lord Rochford, "it is very nearly a daughter, though. Then this must be the child of my friend Harrington's second sister, Ellen. I could almost have guessed it from the likeness; those black eyes are the very image of her mother's."

And what is become of the colonel? any news of him lately?"

Mrs. Harrington shook her head.

"Sad, sad, very sad," muttered Lord Rochford to himself; "and the mother, too, so ill I hear." Then seeing a tear glistening in Amy's eye, he paused, patted her kindly on the shoulder, and told her he was sure she was a great pet at home, and he should be glad to see her at Rochford Park: "and Lucy will like to see you too," he continued. "She never meets any one but grown up people from year's end to year's end. By the by, Mrs. Harrington, I dare say Mrs. Herbert would be very willing to enter into the plan you and I were talking of just now. I wish some day you would mention it."

"You forget," replied Mrs. Harrington, trying to look gracious, "that I said it was quite out of the question at present."

"Oh, no! not at all. But, begging your pardon, I never knew a lady yet who was not willing to change her mind when she had a fair excuse given her."

"You may not have met with any one before," said Mrs. Harrington, in her haughtiest manner, but I must assure you you have met with one now. — What do you want?" she added, for the first time perceiving the footman, who had answered the bell. "Amy, you rang; Jolliffe waits for your orders."

Amy's neck and cheeks in an instant became crimson; but she managed to say, though in a voice scarcely audible, that she wanted the key of the chapel.

"Tell Bridget to send it instantly," said Mrs. Harrington; and she did not notice Amy again till the key was brought, when, putting it into her hands without a word, she motioned her to the door.

And Amy, enchanted at having at last escaped, returned to her cousin even more quickly than she had left her. "O Margaret!" was her exclamation as she ran up, holding the key in her hand, "here it is; but I have got into a dreadful scrape by ringing the bell, and I don't know what I shall do, my aunt will never forgive me."

"Nonsense," replied Margaret, in a really kind manner, "it is only just for the moment; mamma will soon forget it. You have nothing to do but to keep out of her way for some time."

"I am sure she wo'n't," replied Amy; "she looked so angry, and called me Amy Herbert."

"But your name is Herbert, is it not?" said Miss Cunningham with a stare."

"Don't you know what Amy means?" asked Margaret laughing: "people never tack on surnames to christian names, till they are so angry they don't know what else to do. But don't make yourself unhappy, Amy; I know mamma better than you do; she soon forgets: just let me know what she said."

The story was soon told, and Amy's mind considerably eased by her cousin's assurance that she had got into a hundred such scrapes in her life; though there still remained such a recollection of her alarm, that even the quiet beauty of the chapel could not entirely sooth her. Miss Cunningham looked round with curiosity, but with a total want of interest; and Margaret laughed, and said it was a gloomy old place, and then called to her companions to observe the strange little figures which were carved on an ancient monument near the altar, declaring they were the most absurd things she had ever seen. But she could only induce Miss Cunningham to join in the merriment: Amy just smiled, and said, in rather a subdued voice, that

they were odd, and she had often wondered at them before.

"What is the matter, Amy?" asked Margaret: "why don't you speak out; and why are you so grave?"

"I don't quite know," answered Amy, trying to raise her voice; "but I never can laugh and speak loud in a church."

"And why not?" said Miss Cunningham, who had been patting one of the figures with her parasol, and calling it "a little wretch."

"Because," replied Amy, "it is a place where people come to say their prayers and read their bibles."

"Well! and so they say their prayers and read their bibles in their bedrooms," observed Margaret; "and yet you would not mind laughing there."

Amy thought for a moment, and then said, "You know bedrooms are never consecrated."

"Consecrated!" repeated Miss Cunningham, her eyes opening to their fullest extent: "What has that to do with it?"

"I don't know that I can quite tell," replied Amy; "but I believe it means making places like Sundays."

"I wish you would talk sense," said Miss Cunningham, sharply; "I can't understand a word you say."

"I know what I mean myself, though I cannot explain it. On Sunday people never work, or ride about, or read the same books as they do on other days; at least mamma never lets me do it; and she makes me say my catechism and other things like it,—hymns, I mean, and collects."

"That may be your fashion on a Sunday, but it is not mine," said Miss Cunningham. "I used to say my catechism once a month before I was con-

firmed, to get it perfect ; but since then I have never thought about it."

"Have you been confirmed?" asked Margaret and Amy in one breath.

"Yes, to be sure. I am quite old enough ; I was fifteen last month."

"Then you must feel quite grown up now," said Amy.

"Grown up ! why should I ? I shall not do that till I come out in London."

"Shall you not?" said Amy, gravely. "I think I should feel quite grown up if I were confirmed."

"I never heard any one yet call a girl only just fifteen grown up," observed Margaret.

"It is not what I should be called, but what I should feel," replied Amy. "People when they are confirmed, are allowed to do things that they must not before." And as she said this she walked away, as if afraid of being obliged to explain herself more, and went to the lower end of the chapel to look at her favourite monument of the first Baron of Emmerton.

"I never knew any one with such odd notions as Amy," said Margaret, when her cousin was gone. "I never can make out how old she is. Sometimes she seems so much younger than we are, and then again she gets into a grave mood, and talks just as if she were twenty."

"But it is very easy to ask her her age, is it not?" asked the matter-of-fact Miss Cunningham.

"Do you always think persons just the age they call themselves?" said Margaret, laughing.

"Yes, of course, I do, every one, that is, except one of my aunts, who always tells me she is seven-and-twenty, when mamma knows she is five-and-thirty."

"What I mean," said Margaret, "is, that all persons appear different at different times."

"They don't to me," answered Miss Cunningham, shortly. "If I am told a girl is fourteen, I believe her to be fourteen; and if I am told she is twelve, I believe she is twelve. Your cousin is twelve, is she not?"

Margaret saw it was useless to discuss the subject any more; and calling to Amy that they should be late for dinner if they staid any longer, hastened out of the chapel. Amy lingered behind, with the uncomfortable feeling of having something disagreeable associated with a place which once had brought before her nothing but what was delightful. Margaret and Miss Cunningham had seemed perfectly indifferent to what she thought so solemn; and although quite aware that their carelessness did not at all take away from the real sacredness of the chapel, yet it was something new and startling to find that it was possible for persons to enter a place peculiarly dedicated to the service of God without any greater awe than they would have felt in their own homes.

If Amy had lived longer and seen more of the world she would have known, that unhappily, such thoughtlessness is so common as not to be remarkable; but she had passed her life with those who thought very differently; and the first appearance of irreverence was as painful as it was unexpected.

CHAP. IX.

THE thought of being probably obliged again to meet Mrs. Harrington, soon made Amy forget her painful feelings in the chapel; and during the whole of dinner her eye turned anxiously to the door, and her ear caught every sound in the passage, in the dread lest her aunt should enter; and she ate what was placed before her almost unconsciously, without attending to any thing that was said.

Miss Morton was the only person who remarked this; and she had a sufficient opportunity, for no notice was taken of her. She was not introduced to Miss Cunningham; but the young lady cast many curious glances at her as she came into the room, and then a whispered conversation followed between her and Margaret, quite loud enough to be heard. She was described as "the person who teaches us music and drawing," and her birth, parentage, and education were given. And when Miss Cunningham's curiosity was satisfied, she condescended to look at her attentively for nearly a minute, and then appeared entirely to forget that such a being was in existence. Miss Morton bore this gaze without shrinking. There was not a flush on her delicate cheek, or the slightest curl of anger about her gentle mouth; and all that showed she was aware of what was said was the momentary glistening of her eye as she caught the words—"Oh! she is an orphan, is she?" and then Margaret's reply—"Yes; she lost her father and mother both in one month." Amy would have felt very indignant, if she had remarked it, but at that moment she could attend to nothing

but the door; and Dora, whose proud, sulky mood had not yet passed away, sat by the window, and did not speak.

The dinner was very dull. Miss Cunningham professed herself so tired with her walk that she could not eat; and looking at every thing that was offered her, said "she would try it, but really she had such a delicate appetite she could seldom touch any thing;" helping herself, at the same time, to two very good-sized cutlets as a commencement, and finishing with the last piece of apple-tart in the dish near her. Rose fixed her eyes steadily upon her, as she transferred the remains of the tart to her plate; and then turning to Miss Morton, whose seat was always next to hers, said almost aloud, "Why does she not ask first?" Miss Morton looked as grave as she could, and tried to stop her; but although Miss Cunningham heard, it did not at all follow that she understood; and the child's question had no more effect upon her than if it had been put in private.

"Would you let me go with you to your room?" said Amy to Miss Morton, as soon as dinner was over. "I am afraid aunt Harrington will be here presently; and I have got into such a scrape with her."

"But supposing," replied Emily, "that I should think it best for you to stay, what will you do then?"

"Oh! of course," said Amy, "I should do as you thought right: but if you would let me go and tell you all about it I should be so glad; and I will promise to come back again if you say I ought."

"Well!" replied Emily, "if we make that agreement I shall not care; and we will let Rose and her doll stay behind."

Miss Morton's room was becoming to Amy's feel-

ings almost as delightful as the chapel. It was not often that she was admitted there, but whenever she was, her curiosity and interest were greatly excited. There were, in fact, two rooms, a small anteroom and a rather large bedroom; and they would probably have been considered too good to be appropriated to Miss Morton's use, if it had not been that Rose always shared the same apartment. Emily's taste was so good, that wherever she went, some traces of it appeared; and when Amy first saw these rooms after her uncle's arrival, she scarcely recognised them to be the same which she had before known only as desolate lumber-rooms. Not that there were any symptoms of luxury about them, for there was no furniture beyond what was absolutely required; but there were books and work on the table, pictures on the walls, and flowers in the windows; and to all these Amy guessed some history was attached, for the pictures she had been told were of Emily's friends and relations, and the books had been given her by those she was now parted from, perhaps for ever in this world; and the flowers seemed to possess a value beyond any thing they could derive from their own beauty, for they were cherished almost as living beings. Once or twice lately Miss Morton had related to Amy some of the stories relating to these things, and this naturally increased her desire to hear more; but on the present occasion she thought of nothing but the relief of escaping from her aunt; and telling Emily, in a few words, what had occurred, she begged not to be sent back again.

Miss Morton thought for a moment, and then replied, "I am afraid, my dear, that I must be very hard-hearted and say, no. Mrs. Harrington is much more likely to be displeased, if she thinks you have hidden yourself. You know you must see her

again, and then you will still have the same fear, and you will not be comfortable even at home, unless the meeting is over ; but if you face it now, and tell her, if she should say any thing, that you are sorry she has been displeased, and ask her to forgive you, you will return home happy. We never lessen our difficulties by putting off the evil day."

"But," replied Amy, "Margaret says she will forget."

"I think your cousin is wrong," answered Miss Morton. "Some things Mrs. Harrington does forget, but not what she considers liberties : besides, is it not much better to have our faults forgiven than forgotten?"

"But I don't think I did any thing wrong," said Amy.

"No," replied Miss Morton, "it was not wrong in itself ; it was only wrong because it was against your aunt's wishes. She is very particular indeed about some things ; and this, of ringing the bell and giving orders, is one."

"I can't say I am sorry if I am not," said Amy ; "and if I have not done any thing wrong, how can I be so?"

"You may be sorry for having vexed your aunt, though it was unintentionally ; and this is all I wish you to say."

Amy looked very unhappy. "I wish I had not gone away," she said ; "it will be much worse going back again if she is there."

"Yes," replied Miss Morton, "I can quite understand that ; but whether it be easy or difficult it does not make any difference in its being right : and I think," she added, as she put her arm affectionately round Amy's waist and kissed her for the first time, "I think there is some one you love very dearly who would say the same."

Perhaps no kiss that Amy had ever before received had been so valuable as this. At the moment it seemed as if she had power to do any thing that Miss Morton thought right, and she walked to the door with a firm step: then once more her resolution failed, and as she stood with the handle in her hand she said, "Do you think my aunt will be there?"

"I do not think about it," replied Miss Morton; "but if you delay, your courage will be quite gone. You will not shrink from doing what is right, will you?"

Amy waited no longer, but with a desperate effort ran down the turret stairs and along the passage, and opened the school-room door, without giving herself time to remember what she was about to encounter.

The dessert still remained, but Dora and Margaret were standing at the round table in the oriel window, exhibiting their drawings to Lord Rochford, and Mr. and Mrs. Harrington were talking together apart. Amy's first impulse was to screen herself from sight; but she remembered Miss Morton's words, and resolving to meet the trial, at once walked up to the table.

"Ah!" said Lord Rochford, as he perceived her, "here is my little runaway friend, whom I have been looking for, for some minutes. I am sure there must be some drawings of hers to be seen too."

Mrs. Harrington turned round. "Get your drawings, Amy," she said, in her coldest manner. Amy willingly obeyed, thinking any thing preferable to standing still and doing nothing.

"Very pretty, very pretty, indeed," exclaimed Lord Rochford, looking at them; "artist-like decidedly; very good that is." And he pointed to one which Amy knew was the worst of all, and which only struck his eye because the shadows were darker, and the lights brighter, than the rest.

"Has Amy been doing any thing wrong?" said Mr. Harrington, in a low voice, to his wife. "She seems so frightened, yet she always strikes me as being very obedient; and those drawings of hers are admirable."

"She would do very well," answered Mrs. Harrington, "if she would but be as attentive to her general conduct as she is to her accomplishments."

"Oh! careless, I suppose," said Mr. Harrington. "It is not to be wondered at in such a young thing."

"I can never think any age an excuse for an impertinent liberty," was the reply.

"Amy impertinent! it is quite impossible. Come here, my dear, and tell me what you have been doing."

A cloud gathered on Mrs. Harrington's brow; but Amy felt reassured by her uncle's kind manner, and answered as audibly as she could, "I rang the bell, uncle."

Mr. Harrington laughed heartily, and Mrs. Harrington looked still more annoyed.

"This is not the place to talk about it," she said, quickly. "Amy knows very well that I had full reason to be displeased, but, of course, she is too proud to own it."

"Oh no, indeed I am not!" exclaimed Amy. "I did not know I was wrong, aunt; but I am very sorry for having vexed you."

"There," said Mr. Harrington, "you cannot wish for any thing more; she is very sorry, and will not do it again: and now, Charlotte, you must be very sorry, and forgive."

Amy felt as if she hardly liked to be forgiven when she did not think she was in fault; but again she recollected what Miss Morton had said, — that she was to be sorry, not for having been guilty of a

fault, but for having annoyed her aunt; and she checked the feeling of pride, and listened patiently and humbly, while Mrs. Harrington gave her a tolerably long lecture on the impropriety of taking the same liberties at Emmerton, that she would at the cottage, and ended by saying that she hoped, as she grew older, she would know her position better. After which, bestowing upon her a cold unwilling kiss, she promised that she would try and forget what had passed.

Mr. Harrington walked away as the lecture began; disliking so much being said before his visitor, who, he saw, observed what was going on.

Lord Rochford's pity had, indeed, been somewhat excited, and he said, good-naturedly, as Amy came up to the table again, "Well! I hope it is right now. I suspected you were not in such a hurry for nothing; but 'all's well that ends well,' you know. I hate scrapes, and always did, — never let Lucy get into any, do I, darling?"

Miss Cunningham either did not hear, or did not think it worth while to answer: taking advantage of her father's principle that she was never to get into scrapes, she always treated him in the most unceremonious manner possible.

"I don't think you and Mrs. Harrington would quite agree upon that subject," observed Mr. Harrington; "her principle is that storms bring peace."

"Not mine, not mine," said Lord Rochford. "There is nothing in the world I love like peace; so now, Mrs. Harrington, we will be of the same mind about your visit to the Park. You shall come next week, and bring all the young ones, my little friend here included."

"You must excuse my deciding immediately," replied Mrs. Harrington; "and I have great doubts whether going about and seeing people is at all

good for my niece ; even being here upsets her mind."

Poor Amy looked very blank, for it had long been one of her chief wishes to see Rochford Park.

"You must not be out of temper about it," said Mrs. Harrington, as she remarked her disappointed countenance ; "only try and be more attentive, and then you will be sure to be rewarded."

"I shall not let you off, though, so easily," continued Lord Rochford. "I have set my heart upon your coming, and I must have you all ; no exception for good temper, or bad. Come, Harrington, interpose your authority."

"I will promise to use my influence," answered Mr. Harrington ; "and with that you must be satisfied."

Lord Rochford declared he was not at all, but that he had no time to argue the matter, for the carriage had been at the door at least a quarter of an hour, so he should consider the thing as settled.

The parting between Margaret and Miss Cunningham was very affectionate ; and Amy, as she looked on, wondered how so much love could have been inspired in so short a time, and felt it quite a relief that Dora was contented with a cold shake of the hand, since it allowed her to follow her example without being particular. To have kissed Miss Cunningham, would have been almost as disagreeable as to be kissed by her aunt when she was angry.

"That is the most unpleasant girl I ever saw," exclaimed Dora, when she was left alone with Amy, Margaret having followed Miss Cunningham to the carriage. "A proud, conceited, forward thing, who thinks she may give herself any airs she pleases. Now, Amy, don't look grave ; I know you can't endure her."

"I don't like her," said Amy.

"Not like her! You hate her, I am sure you do, —you must."

"I hope not," replied Amy, laughing. "I never hated any one yet."

"Then I am sorry for you," said Dora. "No one can be a good lover who is not a good hater. I would rather have any thing than lukewarmness."

"So would I," replied Amy. "I hope I am not lukewarm; and I am sure I can love some people very dearly, — yes, more than I could ever tell," she added, as she thought of her mamma. "But I don't know whether I could hate; I never met with any one yet to try upon."

"You can't have a better subject than that odious Miss Cunningham. I could not think of her sandy hair, and her ugly unmeaning eyes for two minutes, without feeling that I hated her."

"Please don't say so, Dora," said Amy, earnestly, "it makes me so sorry."

"Does it? I don't see why you should care what I say; it can make no difference to you."

"Oh yes, but indeed it does, for I think it is not right. I don't mean to vex you," continued Amy, seeing the expression of her cousin's countenance change: "I know you are older than I am; and perhaps I ought not to say it, only I could not help being sorry."

"I am not vexed," said Dora: "but it cannot signify to you whether I am right or wrong; it would be different if it were yourself."

"If it were myself," replied Amy, "I could be sorry for myself, and try not to do wrong any more; but I cannot make you sorry, and so it seems almost worse."

"Make me sorry!" exclaimed Dora, in a tone

of surprise. "Of course you can't : but why should you wish it?"

"I always wish every one to be sorry when they do wrong, because, you know, no one is forgiven till they are."

"But supposing they don't think it wrong, you would not have them be sorry then, would you? I see no harm in hating Miss Cunningham."

"It may be wrong," replied Amy, "though you don't think so."

"Who is to judge?" asked Dora.

Amy was silent for a moment, and then said, "Would you let me show you a verse in the Bible, Dora, about it? Mamma made me read it one day when I said I hated some one, though I know I did not really do it, and I have never forgotten it."

"Well, let me see it," said Dora, almost sulkily. Amy took a Bible from the book-case, and pointed to the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of St. John's first Epistle:—"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer : and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." "Oh!" exclaimed Dora, when she had read it, "that is so shocking. Of course, when I talk about hating, I don't mean such hatred as that."

"So I said," replied Amy; "and then mamma told me that if I did not mean it, I ought not to say it; and that the very fact of my using such expressions showed that I had a great dislike, which I ought not to indulge; and then she made me read a great many more verses in this epistle, about its being our duty to love people. But, Dora, I don't mean to teach you any thing, for I am sure you must know it all a great deal better than I do; only I wanted to tell you what mamma said to me."

Amy would probably have been very much surprised if she had known the feelings which passed

through her cousin's mind as she spoke. It had never entered her head that she could give advice or instruction; and yet, perhaps, no words from an older person could have had half the effect of hers. Dora, however, was not in the habit of showing what she felt, and Amy was too simple to guess it even when the exclamation escaped her, "I would give all I am worth to have lived with Aunt Herbert and you all my life, Amy."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Amy, "you cannot be serious. Think of this house, and the beautiful grounds, and Wayland too, where you used to be so happy; you never would bear to live in a cottage."

"I think, sometimes, it makes no difference where people live," answered Dora. "I don't think I am at all happier for papa's having a fine house."

Amy thought of what Susan Reynolds had said, "that eating and drinking and fine clothes did not make people happy;" and it seemed strange that two persons so differently situated should have thought so much alike: but she had not time to talk any longer to Dora, for the evening was closing in, and she was obliged to return home, and, as she thought, without any attendant except the manservant who usually took charge of her. But just as she was settling herself upon her donkey, Bridget appeared at the hall-door with a request that Miss Herbert would be so very kind as to wait one moment longer, for Stephen had been in just before to know if any of the ladies were going back with her, for he wished very much to walk a little way if he might be allowed. "He is only gone up to the stable, Miss," added Bridget, "if it is not too much trouble for you to stop. I can't think what made him go away."

"Never mind," said Amy, "it is never any

trouble to wait for Stephen ; but it will not be long now : that must be he coming down the chesnut walk."

Stephen's hobbling pace was exchanged for a species of trot as he perceived Amy already mounted ; and he came up to her with a thousand apologies for the delay. " But you know, Miss Amy, 'tis not very often I can see you now, so I thought I would make bold for once. And please to tell me now how your mamma is, for she doesn't come here as she used ; and the folks in the village say she's getting as white as a sheet."

" I don't think mamma is as well or as strong as she used to be, Stephen," replied Amy ; " but she does not complain much, only she soon gets tired."

" Oh !" said Stephen, shaking his head, " India, India,—'tis all India, Miss Amy. Why English people shouldn't be contented to stay on English ground, is more than I can guess. A nice comfortable cottage, in a good pasture county, such as this, with a few ups and downs in it to make a variety, is all I should ever wish to have : I want nothing that's to be got from foreign parts ; for it's always been my maxim that one penny in England is worth twenty out of it."

" But," replied Amy, " some people are obliged to go, Stephen. I am sure papa would not have done it if he could have helped it."

" Help, or no help, 'tis what I can't understand," said Stephen. " Not that I mean any disrespect to the Colonel, Miss Amy, but it grieves me to hear the people talk about your poor mamma's pale face."

" I don't think she looks so very pale," said Amy, feeling uncomfortable, and yet hardly owning it to herself.

" The dwellers in the same house are not those

to see the change," replied the old man : " but I don't mean to be vexing your young heart before its time. Sorrow comes soon enough to all ; and," he added reverently, " He who sends it will send His strength with it."

" That is what mamma says," answered Amy. " She is always begging me not to look forward ; but I do long to do it very often : and she would be so happy if she could be sure when papa would come back."

" Look, Miss Amy," said Stephen, gathering a daisy from the grass, " do you see that ? Now you might try, and so might I, and so might all the great folks that ever lived,—we might all try all our lives, and we never could make such a thing as that ; and yet you know 'tis but a tiny flower that nobody thinks about : and sometimes when I get wishing that things were different, I take up a daisy and look at it, till it seems most wonderful how it should be made, and how it should live ; and then it comes into my head how many millions there are like it, and how many plants, and trees, and insects, and animals, and living souls too, and that God made them all,—all that are here, and all that are up above (for I suppose there is no harm in thinking that there may be such) ; and so, at last, do you see, I don't only *know*, but I can *feel*, that He is wise ; and my heart gets quite light again, for I am sure that He knows what is best ; and as He has not told us what is to come, 'tis but folly to wish about it."

" Well ! Stephen," said Amy, " I really will try ; but it is very hard sometimes."

" Ah ! yes," replied Stephen, " we all have something hard, Miss Amy ; young or old, there is always something. 'Twas hard for me when the master went away and left the old house to itself, as you

may say; and there are some things that are hard now."

"What things?" asked Amy, as she almost stopped her donkey, and looked eagerly into the old steward's face. "I thought you never would be unhappy again when uncle Harrington came back."

"'Tis he, and 'tisn't he, that's come," replied Stephen. "There's a change; but 'twas the foolishness of an old man's heart to think that it wouldn't be so."

"But what is changed," said Amy.

"Every thing," exclaimed Stephen; "the master, and madam, and the young ladies, and all; only Mrs. Bridget isn't a bit different."

"Oh, but Stephen, you know my cousins were so young when they went away: of course they are altered."

"To be sure, Miss Amy, I wasn't so foolish as not to expect that; but I did hope that the young ladies wouldn't be above coming to see one, and talking a bit; and that the young gentleman (God bless him and keep him, for he's the only one) would have been here, and that perhaps they would have wanted a little teaching about the ponies. I had two of the little Welsh ones brought in from the hills on purpose, and took a pleasure in training them, but no one comes near me to look at them."

"If you would only mention it," said Amy, "I am sure my cousins would be delighted."

"No, replied Stephen, "it's not in my way to put myself forward, so for those who don't care to ask after me. If they had come down to the cottage, and said a word to me, or little Nelly, and then noticed that the ponies were about there (for I keep them in the field), 'twould have been all very well, and natural like: but I shall say nothing about it now; only if master should inquire after any, he can

have them. And Master Frank too, 'twill never be like the old times till there is a young gentleman about the place."

"Frank is expected at Christmas," said Amy: "he went to stay with his uncle, Sir Henry Charlton, after poor Edward died, because it was a change for him; and he was so wretched; and since then he has been at school."

"I'm growing old, Miss Amy," answered Stephen; "and Christmas is a long time to look forward to. I don't mean to complain, only 'twould have been a comfort to have seen him here with the rest, and perhaps have kept me from thinking so much about him that's gone: but it's all right; and," he added, more earnestly, as he brushed his hand hastily across his eyes, "I would not have him back again,—no, not if I could see him a king upon his throne."

"And does no one ever go to visit you, Stephen?" asked Amy, rather sadly.

"Yes," he replied, "the young lady, Miss Morton, comes very often; and though she is not one of the family, yet it does one good to see her, and talk to her; and then, too, she brings the little one with her; and sure enough she's the sweetest little cherub that ever was born."

"What, Rose?" said Amy. "Is she not a darling little thing?"

"I never saw but one before that I thought I could like better," said Stephen, laying his hard sun-burnt hand on Amy's tiny fingers; "and that one I hope God will bless, and keep for many a long day. But I must not go on farther, for you don't get on so fast when I am walking with you."

Amy pressed the old man's hand affectionately, begging him to come on only a little way, for she hardly ever saw him now.

But Stephen was firm. He had gone to his usual

point, a splendid oak, commonly called the Baron's tree, from a tradition that it had been planted when Emmerton was built; and it seemed almost as if a charm would be broken if he went further. Amy stopped, and watched him till he was out of sight, and then pursued her ride through the forest, with a sadder heart than she had begun it.

"You are late to-night, my love," said Mrs. Herbert, as her little girl dismounted from her donkey; "you forget that the days are beginning to close in: and what makes you look so unhappy?"

"Oh! not much, mamma: only please don't stand here in the cold."

"You are so very suddenly careful of me," replied Mrs. Herbert, smiling: "is this the last thing you learnt at the Hall?"

"No," answered Amy; "only Stephen says you look pale, and all the village people say so too; but I don't think you are so now."

"I am much better to-night, my dear child," said Mrs. Herbert. "You must not listen to what every one says, and get frightened without reason."

Amy's spirits were revived in a moment, and she ran gaily into the cottage, and in a very short time was seated by the fireside with her mamma, recounting the incidents of the day,—Miss Cunningham, and her behaviour, her aunt's anger, and her own conversations with Dora, and old Stephen, furnishing quite sufficient materials for a long story. "There were one or two things that my aunt told me, which I could not quite understand," she said, after having repeated a great portion of the lecture she had received. "What did she mean, mamma, by my knowing my position, and speaking of me as if I were not one of the family? I am her niece."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Herbert; "but people think differently about their families: some persons consider

that every one who is any relation at all, forms one of the family, and others only call those so who are their own children."

"But my position," repeated Amy; "why is my position different from my cousins'? You are a lady, and papa is a gentleman."

"Compare this cottage with Emmerton," replied Mrs. Herbert, "and then you will see the difference, and why people in general, would think more of your cousins than of you."

A sudden pang shot through Amy's heart. "Dear mamma," she exclaimed, "I wish you would not say so."

"Why not? my dear; why must not that be said which is true?"

"It makes me uncomfortable," said Amy, "and wicked too, I am afraid. If papa were to come home, should we be able to live in a larger house?"

"I do not know," answered her mother; "but if we could, I do not think we should wish it."

"Ah! mamma, that is because you are so much better than I am. I never used to think so till I saw my cousins at Emmerton; but I should like very much to live in a place like that."

Mrs. Herbert looked grave, yet she felt thankful that her child spoke openly of her feelings, as it enabled her so much better to guide them.

"It is not only the house that I should enjoy," continued Amy, "but I think people would love me better. Margaret did not seem to think any thing of me when Miss Cunningham was by; and when Lord Rochford and my uncle came in, I thought every one had more business there than I had. It was very kind in him to look at my drawings, but still I felt nobody by the side of Dora and Margaret."

The conversation was here stopped by the entrance of Mr. Walton, who often came in at this time of

the evening, on his return from his visits in the parish. Amy was only half pleased to see him, for she would willingly have talked much longer to her mamma alone ; but her mind was partly relieved by the confession she had made of her foolish wishes ; and Mrs. Herbert's countenance brightened so much at the sight of him, that she was soon reconciled to the interruption.

Mr. Walton brought as usual several tales of distress and difficulty, which Mrs. Herbert, notwithstanding her limited income, was always the first to relieve ; and Amy, as she listened to the account of a widow with six children, unable to pay her rent, a father on his sick bed, totally unable to provide for his family, and other cases of a similar kind, and then looked round upon the comfortable room in which she was sitting, with its bright curtains and carpet, its easy sofas and chairs, and the preparations for tea upon the table, felt grieved and ashamed that she should have allowed a pang of envy to render her for a single moment insensible to her many blessings ; and perhaps Mr. Walton's parish tales produced a greater effect than even her mother's words could have done, for she went to bed that night far more contented than she had been on her return from the Hall.

CHAP. X.

NOTHING more was said about the proposed visit to Rochford Park on Amy's two following visits to Emmerton ; and though her anxiety was great to know if she were to be included in the party, she only ventured once to ask Margaret two or three questions, and then received a short, abrupt answer—that nothing was settled, and that it could not be any concern of hers. The fact was, that Margaret disliked the notice which Lord Rochford had taken of Amy, on the day he had spent at Emmerton, for she had resolved in her own mind that she would be Miss Cunningham's friend and companion, and her fears of a rival were considerably excited. Of this, however, there was no occasion to be afraid. Amy felt not the smallest inclination to be intimate with her new acquaintance ; and her only wish for being of the party was, that she might see Rochford Park, which had always been described to her as one of the finest places in England. Mrs. Harrington did not appear at all likely to give her any information, for whenever they met, which was but seldom, she only said a few words more hastily and sharply than she had done before, in order to show that she had not quite forgotten Amy's offence ; and it was not till the evening, previous to the day which was at last fixed for going, that any hope was given her of accompanying them.

"Take this note to your mamma," said Mrs. Harrington, coming to the hall-door just as Amy was about to set off ; "and if she should say yes to what I have asked, the carriage shall call for you at

eleven : if not, you had better come here by yourself, as usual, and you shall go with us to Lord Rochford's; and we will take you home at night, though it will be considerably out of our way."

Amy's gratitude even, was subdued in her aunt's presence; but she did manage to say something about being delighted ; and then, carefully depositing the precious note in the pocket of her saddle, she made her donkey move at its quickest pace down the road.

Mrs. Harrington turned away with the consciousness of having done a disagreeable thing in a disagreeable manner. She had fully determined upon not taking Amy; it would only crowd the carriage ; and she did not wish it to be considered a necessary thing, that where her daughters went, her niece should go too : but a note, which she had that morning received from Lord Rochford, expressly mentioning Amy, and adding a hope that Mrs. Herbert would be prevailed on to comply with Lady Rochford's wishes, and join the party, left her no choice ; and it was happy for Amy that she did not know how very little her aunt desired her presence.

Mrs. Harrington's note inclosed Lady Rochford's invitation, which Mrs. Herbert decided at once it would be better not to accept for herself ; but she did not object to Amy's going, though she feared that if Emmerton in its quietness, and almost solemnity, excited her longings after riches, and grandeur, Rochford Park would probably have a still greater effect. Yet, even if this were the case, she trusted that she should be able to check the feeling ; and she knew that the same temptations were nearly certain to arise in after-years, when she would not be at hand to put Amy on her guard against them.

Amy's delight was unmeasured. Her aunt's harsh looks, and Miss Cunningham's disagreeable manners,

were quite forgotten in the pleasure she anticipated in going to a new place ; and long before her usual hour of rising she had been to the window several times, to see if the weather promised to be fine. The calm grey mist of the morning was hardly what she would have desired, but there was a joyousness in her own spirit which made almost every thing appear bright ; and when at length the sun broke slowly through its veil of clouds, shedding a clear line of light over the distant hills, and then bursting forth in full radiance over the richly-wooded country, and the cheerful village, Amy's heart bounded within her, and again, as she recollected her feelings of envy on her return from Emmerton, she sighed to think that she should have been so ungrateful as to wish for any thing beyond the enjoyments which God had given her.

Punctuality was one of the virtues which Mrs. Harrington strictly enforced ; and Amy almost trembled when she heard the clock strike eleven as she rode up to the lodge. She knew also, that on this point her mamma and aunt entirely agreed ; and she had received many injunctions on no account to delay on the road, and so be the means of keeping the carriage waiting : and to have vexed her mother would have been even worse than to have excited Mrs. Harrington's anger. Happily, however, there were some last orders to be given, which caused a delay of about five minutes, and Amy had time to dismount, and join her cousins in the school-room, before her aunt appeared.

She seemed more inclined to be kind than before ; and Amy felt so much reassured by her change of manner, that, although placed in the middle of the back seat, between Dora and Margaret, and having Mrs. Harrington's face nearly opposite, she contrived to be extremely happy. It was only neces-

sary to be quite still and silent, to avoid giving offence ; and this to her was no punishment.

From being so much alone, she had learnt the secret of amusing herself with her own thoughts, and found them far more agreeable than the effort of talking in a constrained way to her cousins. Dora and Margaret willingly followed her example ; the former from being rather in a sulky mood, and the latter from finding her attempts at conversation useless. The drive was consequently a quiet, but not a dull one ; and the distance appeared very short to Amy, though Dora had yawned at least four times, and at last muttered that she could never think Miss Cunningham was worth coming so far to see.

"I cannot say I want very much to see her either," replied Amy ; "only the place, — I would give any thing to see that."

"Then look," said Dora, pointing to a long white building on the nearest hill, "there it is, just to your right."

Amy looked eagerly, and fancied she saw something very grand, though only the general outline could be discovered ; but as she came nearer, still keeping her eyes fixed upon it, she was quite satisfied that it must be what it had been described — the most splendid nobleman's seat in the county. "Oh !" she exclaimed, jumping up in the carriage ; "it is ; yes, it really is more beautiful than Emmerton."

"Sit still, pray," said Dora ; "you nearly trod upon my foot."

Amy reseated herself, and felt rebuked ; but the next moment, as she caught the full front of the house through an opening in the trees, she forgot every thing but her admiration, and again began expatiating upon its beauty.

"Look, Dora ! is it not lovely ? It is so large, so much larger than Emmerton, and then those beautiful pillars, and the broad steps with the figures in front : it is just like a palace."

"A palace !" replied Dora : "what nonsense you talk, only because you have never seen any thing else like it. It is a very good gentleman's house ; but there are hundreds in England just as fine."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Harrington ; "there are very few places which can in any degree compare with it."

"Wayland was nearly as large, papa," answered Dora, more gently than usual ; for her father's mildness had a much greater effect upon her, than her mother's sharpness.

Mr. Harrington smiled. "Your affection for Wayland," he said, "causes you to magnify it in a strange manner. I suppose it is scarcely more than half the size."

Amy felt rather triumphant, and a little inclined to show it, but she checked herself ; and as they had now reached the park gate, a fresh interest was excited in her mind, and she had no inclination to continue the discussion.

If the exterior of the house had appeared imposing at a distance, it lost none of its effect upon a nearer approach : and when, after driving a considerable way through the park, the carriage at length stopped at the side front, Amy's expectations were raised to the highest pitch, though something of fear mingled with her pleasure as she thought of the strangers she should probably see, and wondered whether she knew exactly how it would be proper to behave.

Lord Rochford met them at the door, and expressed great pleasure at their arrival ; but Amy felt a little disappointed that he did not say any thing in particular to her, as her mamma had told her that he had sent her a special invitation : but Lord Rochford

was at that moment too much occupied in doing the honours of his house to Mr. and Mrs. Harrington, and too anxious to point out the improvements he had made, and hear them pronounced perfect, to think of her.

Poor Amy felt lost and bewildered as they entered the splendid hall, with its painted ceiling, and pillars of Italian marble; and then passed on through long suites of rooms furnished in the most sumptuous manner, some hung with delicate silk, and glittering with gilded cornices and costly ornaments; and others crowded with rare pictures and richly-bound books, while sofas, ottomans, cabinets, and tables of the most exquisite workmanship, gave an air of comfort to what would otherwise have appeared only desolate grandeur. It seemed to her like fairy land. Emmerton, and its deep windows and handsome but sombre furniture, at once sank into insignificance; and she no longer wondered that Miss Cunningham had been little inclined to admire any thing there, when she could compare with it, the gorgeousness of her own home.

It seemed strange, too, that her uncle and aunt could see it all without apparently noticing it. They walked quickly on, as if only wishing that there were fewer rooms to go through; Dora followed, looking round certainly, but not giving any symptoms of admiration; and Amy found that her feelings were shared by no one excepting Margaret, who, however, was more engaged in spying out what she called "odd things," and peeping into the books which lay on the table, than in any thing else.

"I think I must leave you young ones here," said Lord Rochford, opening a door which led into a small hall, with French windows fronting the pleasure-ground. "These are Lucy's own rooms; and she and madame will take great care of you, while

Mrs. Harrington pays a visit to Lady Rochford. I am afraid she is not well enough this morning to receive you all."

Amy wondered for an instant who madame could be; but she was not left long in doubt, for immediately behind Miss Cunningham, who came forward to receive them, appeared her French governess, a tall, thin, inelegant-looking person, with a good-natured merry face, a dress made in the newest Parisian fashion, and a cap which seemed formed rather for the purpose of receiving a certain quantity of ribbon and artificial flowers, than as any covering to the black wig which it only half concealed. Amy felt very much amused, and would perhaps have smiled, had she not remembered that there was something unfeeling, independent of its being unladylike, in turning a foreigner into ridicule; but Margaret's merriment was almost audible, as Madame placed chairs for them, hoped, in broken English, they were not fatigued with their drive, and then, with a swimming French curtsy, vanished from the room.

"That is your governess, is it?" said Dora, almost before the door was closed, in a tone which plainly spoke her opinion of her.

"Yes," replied Miss Cunningham; "she is the most good-natured creature in the world; and I am so fond of her: she speaks French beautifully."

"Not a first-rate qualification for a native," said Dora.

"Oh! but she paints flowers, too, and sings."

"Sings!" repeated Margaret: "but she is so old."

"Indeed! no, she is not. She sings, and plays the guitar; and she is teaching me: papa has just bought me a new one." And Miss Cunningham took up a richly inlaid instrument, with a long blue

ribbon attached to it, and began striking some false notes which she called chords.

"I don't like the guitar," said Dora, "unless it is played beautifully."

"Oh! but madame is quite a superior performer; and she says I have made a wonderful proficiency, considering the few lessons I have had. She practises a great deal, not in this room, for I can't bear the twang, but in the next, which is her own. This is my study, and the little one within I call my boudoir." Here Miss Cunningham looked round, apparently expecting some flattering observation to be made; and of course all eyes were immediately directed to the room and its furniture. Dora's gaze was the most fixed and earnest; and when it was ended, she played with her parasol, and was silent: but Margaret declared that every thing she saw was delightful—the chintz furniture such an extremely pretty pattern, the tables so well placed, the piano so very handsome, and the view from the windows so lovely—that Amy found there was nothing left for her to say; and feeling a great dislike to merely echoing Margaret's words, she contented herself with expressing what she really thought—"that it looked very pretty and comfortable," and then amused herself with Margaret's panegyrics. Miss Cunningham probably would have talked long without weariness on this favourite topic, but Dora's patience was soon exhausted; and she at last interrupted a question of Margaret's, which she foresaw would lead to one of Miss Cunningham's long dissertations upon herself and the splendour of her family mansion, by asking whether they were to go out before dinner.

"We dine at four, altogether," replied Miss Cunningham, "so we had better, I suppose." And then, turning to Margaret, she began, as Dora had

feared, not merely an answer, but a history. There was no resource but to sit still and endure it; and when at length it ended, to Dora's great relief, Miss Cunningham prepared to show them through the grounds.

Amy soon found that the uncomfortable feelings she had experienced at Emmerton were beginning to return. She almost envied Dora her proud indifference; for though Miss Cunningham took little notice of her, it was quite evident that she did not wish for attention: but Amy could not be happy as one of the party, when no one spoke to her, or even appeared to recollect that she was present. The grounds were very extensive, and something lovely opened at every turn; but she felt neglected, and not all the costly flowers and shrubs in the garden, or the beautiful birds in the aviary, nor even the bright sunshine itself, could make her forget that she was with persons who did not think it worth while to interest themselves about her.

Perhaps the very charm of the place only increased her uneasiness. It was so rich and brilliant, that it seemed more than to realise all she could possibly desire: but there was no hope that *her* father would ever possess any thing like it; it was to be looked upon, but not to be enjoyed: and as she remembered the tale of Aladdin's lamp, she longed that it could be hers but for one moment, that she might raise a palace, not for herself, but her mamma, which should be in every respect like Rochford Park. These dreams so absorbed Amy's mind that she paid but little attention to what passed between Margaret and Miss Cunningham, for they were the only two who conversed; Dora being too grand to make any remarks beyond what were absolutely necessary. At length, however, she was struck by Miss Cunningham's exclaiming,

in rather a more energetic tone than usual, "Pray, has your mamma mentioned any thing to you about the new plan?"

"Plan!" repeated Margaret. "No. What do you mean?"

"Oh! the plan about our going to London."

"We can have nothing to do with that," said Margaret.

"Yes, you have; it is your plan, as well as ours."

"But what do you mean?" continued Margaret; "I never heard a word about it before."

"Why you know," said Miss Cunningham, "that papa and my brother generally go to town in the spring, and leave mamma, and me, and madame, here, because there is some fancy about its suiting mamma better; and dreadfully dull it is. But now I am growing so old, they think it quite right that I should have some one better to teach me than poor madame; and mamma has promised to let me go to London after Easter, and one of my aunts is to be with me, and I am to see every thing, and have lessons in every thing."

"But that is no concern of ours," said Margaret; "and Easter is so far off."

"It does concern you, though," replied Miss Cunningham, "for papa has got it into his head that I shall learn much better if I can get some other girls to have lessons with me: he says it will be much more amusing, and I shall like it better; and so he has been trying to persuade your mamma to let you go up too, and then the same masters will do for all."

"Then that is what Lord Rochford meant the other day," said Amy, "when he talked about a plan, and begged aunt Harrington to mention it to mamma."

"Did he wish you to go too?" asked Miss Cunningham.

The words of this question were very simple; but the tone of it showed plainly that the idea was not agreeable; and Amy felt quite abashed, and answered hurriedly, that she did not know what was wished, for that no more had been said upon the subject.

"Won't it be delightful?" said Miss Cunningham to Margaret. "We shall be together so much, and shall go to the theatre; and perhaps there will be some parties for girls of our age: you know there are such things."

"It would be all very nice if there were any chance of it," replied Margaret.

"And why should there not be?" exclaimed Miss Cunningham, who had never dreamt of any obstacle to a wish of her father's.

"Because," said Margaret, "mamma will not allow it."

"And why not? what objection can she have?"

"She will not let us go while Emily Morton is with us," said Margaret, "because she does not think it necessary. Before she came, I often used to hear her talk of taking us to London for masters, but now she never mentions it; and it was only yesterday I heard her say, that we had greater advantages at present than we possibly could have by any other means."

"Oh! but that is all nonsense," said Miss Cunningham. "Just let papa talk to her for ten minutes, and she will soon come round."

"You don't know mamma," replied Dora, who, being very firm and decided herself, particularly admired decision in others. "If she does not approve of the plan, all the world might talk to her, and it would have no effect."

"But why does Miss Morton stay with you?" asked Miss Cunningham. "Are you very fond of her?"

"Fond of her!" exclaimed Margaret. "No, indeed; it would rejoice my heart to see her fairly out of the house."

"It would not mine," said Amy, whose spirit was roused at hearing a person she loved, so mentioned.

A moment before Dora would have taken Miss Morton's part, but she could not bear Amy to interfere as if it were her business; and, in an irritated voice, she asked, what it could possibly signify whether she liked Miss Morton or not.

"Nothing," replied Amy, gently; "only I am very fond of her."

"Then I wish you would keep her," said Margaret. "I shall dislike her more than ever, now, for I shall always think she is preventing us from going to London."

"But why don't you persuade your mamma to get rid of her?" exclaimed Miss Cunningham. "Madame would not stay an hour in the house if I did not like her."

"Ah, but it is different with us," replied Margaret. "Mamma will have her own way about it: she knows very well that we dislike Emily, and she is always finding fault with her, herself; but when it came to the point, I am certain she would say no: and then, too, both papa and mamma hate London, and would be very glad of an excuse for not going."

"But do you really think," asked Miss Cunningham, "that if it were not for Miss Morton they would be obliged to do it?"

"Yes; at least they always said so before Emily came."

"Well! if you are quite sure of that, I can see

no reason why we should not try and manage the matter between us."

"Hush!" exclaimed Margaret, who observed that Amy seemed quite aghast at the cool way in which this was said; "there is no use in speaking about it now. Is that your dinner-bell?"

"Yes; but there is no hurry: do promise to talk to your mamma; I am sure papa will do all he can: we should be so happy together in London."

"Without Emily Morton," said Margaret; "it would drive me wild to feel she was always tacked on to me."

"Oh! Margaret, how unkind you are!" exclaimed Amy. "You know Miss Morton is always trying to please every one; and she never gets out of temper."

"Miss Morton pets you till she makes you as disagreeable as she is herself," said Margaret, angrily.

Amy for an instant was strongly inclined to retort, but she did not give way to the feeling; and preferring to walk behind with Dora, did not speak again till they reached the house. Margaret and Miss Cunningham immediately began a low, and apparently a very interesting conversation, for it was continued at intervals even when they were dressing for dinner; though whenever Dora or Amy approached them, they broke off abruptly, looking very mysterious, as if the fate of the world depended on no person's knowing what they were talking of. But Amy thought little about them, being entirely engrossed with the dread of dining for the first time at what appeared to her a regular party. The feeling had been lurking in her mind during the whole day, but the novelty of all she had seen had distracted her attention: now, however, the awful moment was drawing near; and even her desire to see every thing, and her admiration of the house and furniture, could not prevent her from wishing that she could

transport herself back to the cottage just till dinner was over. She felt also quite overpowered by Miss Cunningham's dress, and the profusion of brooches and chains, with which she adorned herself, turning them over, one by one, with an air of the utmost indifference, and then, finding that her visitors did not make any observation, calling to them to ask their opinion as to which suited her best. Dora took care to object to almost all, or to compare them with something more splendid belonging to other people : but Amy, who had never yet seen such beautiful things worn by a person so young, expressed her admiration very openly ; and then, as she caught sight of her plain silk frock in the large looking-glass, wondered whether Lady Rochford would think it very strange that she was not dressed equally well.

"May I sit by you, Dora?" she whispered, as they went down stairs.

"I can't tell," replied Dora ; "it will depend upon how we go into dinner."

"But what shall I do?" asked Amy. "Do you think any one will speak to me?" Dora laughed ; but when she looked at her cousin, she saw that her eyes were almost filled with tears. "I am so frightened," continued Amy, "I know I shall do something very wrong, and then every one will stare at me. If I might only stay in the drawing-room ——"

"Every one would stare at you a great deal more then," replied Dora ; "besides, there is no party ; there will be only Lord and Lady Rochford, and Mr. Cunningham, and ourselves."

"Mr. Cunningham!" said Amy. "Is he very old?"

"Oh yes, quite grown up," replied Dora. "But you need not trouble yourself about him, for I dare

say he will not speak to you ; and if he does, you won't understand him."

Amy recollected having heard Dora mention Mr. Cunningham's peculiar voice before ; and she was on the point of asking her to explain what was the matter with it, but they were standing at the drawing-room door, and there was no time.

Lady Rochford was seated on the sofa talking to Mrs. Harrington ; and Amy was instantly struck with the likeness between her and her daughter. There was the same sandy hair, the same dull eye, the same fair complexion, the only difference being in the greater softness of expression, and the lines which continual illness, and additional years, had worn in her face. Her dress, too, was very youthful ; and it was difficult for a stranger to believe that she could possibly be the mother of the tall, gentlemanly young man, who stood by her side, apparently intent upon examining the ornaments on the mantelpiece. Lady Rochford's manner, however, had none of Miss Cunningham's scornfulness : her temper was very sweet, and it was her wish to make every one about her happy ; and if she did sometimes fail, it was more from over attention, and insisting upon their enjoying themselves in her way, rather than in their own, than from any other cause. Amy felt relieved by the kindness with which she spoke to her, and almost happy when she had contrived to hide herself behind Dora, and could look at what was going on without being observed ; and dinner being announced almost immediately, she kept close by her side, hoping that after all she might not find it as terrible as she had expected. But her hope was soon crushed. There was a slight confusion as they went into the dining-room ; no one seemed to know exactly where to place themselves ; and Amy was obliged to leave Dora, and take the vacant seat between her aunt Harrington, and Mr. Cunningham.

"George, you will take care of your little neighbour," said Lord Rochford; "do find out what she would like to have."

The silent Mr. Cunningham turned to Amy and spoke; but whether his words were English, French, or German, it would have been impossible for her in her fright to have told. By persons who were well acquainted with him, he was very easily understood; but in consequence of a defect in the formation of his mouth, his articulation was so indistinct as to be almost unintelligible to strangers; and Amy looked at him with mingled fear and surprise. Again he endeavoured to render his meaning clear; but not a word could Amy comprehend, though, guessing what he would say, she faltered, "Chicken, if you please," and then looked at her aunt, and blushed painfully, from the idea that she had done exactly the very thing she ought not. Mr. Cunningham apparently was very desirous of seeing her comfortable; for during dinner he made a point of offering her every thing on the table which he thought she might like, and each time he opened his lips, Amy's distress revived. But the climax of misery was when, after the dessert being placed on the table, he seemed inclined to enter into conversation with her. Happily she caught the words, "Live at Emmerton," in his first sentence, and contrived to answer it correctly; but as he went on, the confusion of sound increased, and perfectly bewildered between endeavouring to make out the meaning of the last question, and the dread of hearing a new one, she continued to repeat "Yes" and "No" at regular intervals, resolving in her own mind that it would be better to live at the cottage all her life, even if it were twice as small, and she were never to see any one, than be condemned to the penance of talking to Mr. Cunningham.

Her cousins from the opposite side of the table watched her with considerable amusement, though after a short time Dora's compassion was much excited, and once or twice she attempted to help her, by partly repeating the question when she understood it better than Amy; but this only served to increase Mr. Cunningham's desire to make himself intelligible, and the eagerness with which he went over the ground again rendered the sounds only the more perplexing, so that Dora was obliged to resign Amy to her fate, and wait with patience till Lady Rochford should move.

The looked-for moment did at last arrive, and Amy's spirits rose like those of a prisoner released from captivity, for nearly at the last moment, having answered "Yes," when she ought to have said "No," she found a large bunch of grapes placed upon her plate, and not liking to confess she had misunderstood, and still less liking to eat them, she was obliged to leave them, and went out, wondering whether Mr. Cunningham would remark it, and if he did, what he would think of her.

The evening was but short, and to Amy it was rather stupid. Margaret and Miss Cunningham left the room together soon after dinner, and only appeared again when they were summoned to tea. Lady Rochford talked a good deal to Dora, and asked her to play and sing; but she said very little to Amy, except that, observing her interested in a book of prints which Miss Cunningham had brought before dinner for Margaret to see, she declared that it must be much more agreeable to her to look at a cabinet of minerals; and taking the book away, Amy was obliged for the next half hour to turn over a number of drawers filled with odd shaped stones, and pieces of iron and copper, about which she knew nothing, and cared less.

There was some pleasure, notwithstanding, for there was no necessity to admire them, and she could stand with them in her hand, and amuse herself with the other things in the room, since no one took any notice of her; but the marked difference between herself and her cousins had never been so observable before. Even the servants overlooked her, and forgot to offer her any coffee; and her wishes of the morning returned with redoubled vigour. Not that she would have been Miss Cunningham, for her own mother was a treasure beyond all price; she would only willingly have given her an equal share of the world's riches and grandeur. Mr. Cunningham did not come into the drawing-room till tea was nearly over; but Lord Rochford and Mr. Harrington soon joined them, and the former immediately began urging upon Mrs. Harrington the importance of acceding to the plan he had mentioned at Emmerton.

Amy saw that her aunt was annoyed by the subject being named so openly, for she remarked immediately that it was time for them to prepare for returning, and though Dora and Margaret lingered as long as they could to hear what was said, she preserved perfect silence until they were gone.

"Mamma will say no," exclaimed Margaret; "I could see it by the way she bit her lip."

"And papa will make her say yes," replied Miss Cunningham. "He never gives up any thing he has set his heart on."

"Then there is one good thing," said Dora, "they will have a subject of interest to discuss for the remainder of their lives. You might just as easily move this wall as mamma."

"I shall never rest till it is settled," continued Miss Cunningham; "fancy the delight of being in London, and driving about in the parks, and seeing

all the shops, and buying whatever one likes. I shall give all my old dresses to my maid ; for I am determined to have quite a new set of my own choosing."

"It would be very nice," said Margaret with a sigh of hopeless regret; "and to think that that pale-faced, black-haired Emily Morton should be the only thing to stand in the way."

"Ah!" said Miss Cunningham, significantly, "we will see about that," and some more whispering went on between her and Margaret.

Amy did not remark this conversation, but she said in a low voice to Dora, "Does Mr. Cunningham go to town with them always?"

"Yes," answered Dora, laughing, "and you must go to town, too, to learn his language. French, Italian, German, and double Dutch—what an accomplished person you will be!"

"I don't mean to be unkind to him," said Amy; "but it would take off a great deal of my pleasure."

"Oh no! it would not; it is only because you are not accustomed to him: every one in the house understands him."

"Do they? but then they are older. Oh Dora! you cannot think how frightened I was. I was so afraid he would think me rude and unfeeling."

"I should have been afraid of laughing," said Dora; "I never heard such an extraordinary voice in my life."

"Perhaps I might have laughed if he had not been so kind; and then it vexes mamma so, if I ever ridicule a person's misfortunes; she says that we never can tell when the same things may be sent to ourselves."

Dora was thoughtful for a minute; at length she said, "You are so grave about things, Amy: it is not human nature not to laugh at such oddities."

"But," replied Amy, "mamma says we have two natures, a good one and a bad one, and that human nature is the bad one."

"Two natures!" exclaimed Dora, "what can you mean?"

"I wish you would ask mamma some day," answered Amy; "she would tell you so much better than I can."

"She would find it so much trouble," said Dora, sadly; "I have not been taught like you:" and she turned hastily away, and scolding Margaret for being so slow in getting ready, declared it would not do to wait any longer, and ran down stairs.

It was a happy thing for Amy that her dread of Mr. Cunningham prevented her from indulging to its full extent the wish of accompanying her cousins to London, if Mr. Harrington should consent to their going; but the incidents of the day had been quite sufficient to excite her imagination to the utmost. The magnificence of Rochford Park had realised many of her gayest dreams; and while her uncle and aunt and her cousins, giving way to the weariness consequent on a long day, composed themselves to sleep, she felt quite at liberty to build a castle in the air, which should have all the splendour of the princely mansion they had left, without the drawback of its inhabitants. In a few moments she was living at a park, with her father returned from India, her mother in perfect health and happiness, and her cousins and Emily Morton on a visit to them. The house was filled with company; there were pleasant drives and rides, a pony for herself and a pony-chaise for her mamma, handsome dinners, and amusements of every kind for her father's visitors; and the chapel was also

thought of, but it seemed inconsistent with her other dreams, and she could not decide upon its being used every day; perhaps once a week would be sufficient. Then again the scene changed to London—to handsome shops, and beautiful dresses, and rich ornaments, just like Miss Cunningham's; and the delight of going to a play when she liked, having constantly new books, and being able to make presents to all her friends, and in the midst of this vision of grandeur, the carriage stopped at the little white gate of Emmerton cottage. Her mother's voice recalled her to herself; but even its much loved, gentle tone could not at that instant entirely content her. A feeling of dissatisfaction with every thing had taken possession of her mind, and the gaiety of her spirit was fled.

But few words passed between Mrs. Herbert and her brother, Mrs. Harrington complaining of being extremely cold, and objecting to the horses being kept standing; and Amy was not sorry for this, as she longed to be quiet with her mamma after the excitement of the day. Her spirits however were too much depressed to be again roused even by the interest of talking over all she had done and seen; and after a few attempts at answering her mamma's questions, she gave it up in despair, and burst into tears. Mrs. Herbert guessed directly what was the matter, on finding that Amy could assign no reason for her distress. Her cousins had not been unkind, her aunt had not been angry, she had seen every thing she expected, but she was quite tired, and this was the only account she could give. "I suspect a night's rest will be the most certain means of making you feel happy again, my love;" said Mrs. Herbert: "suppose you prepare to go to bed, and I will hear all you can tell me to-morrow."

"I should like very much to talk to you to-night," replied Amy, almost sobbing; "I am very unhappy, but I cannot tell why."

"At any rate," continued her mother, "it would be better to wait a little while, and when you are ready to read, you shall come to my room, and then you can say all you wish, and go to bed afterwards with your mind at ease."

"But I would rather say it now," answered Amy, "if I only knew how to begin. I don't think, mamma, it makes me happy seeing fine places."

"Because you wish they were your own; is that the reason?"

"I long for them very much," replied Amy; "but, mamma, I have told you all about it before."

"Yes, my dear child, so you have, but knowing that you have told me before, will not ease your mind now."

"Only that I don't like repeating it all over again," said Amy; "it seems as if all you had said had done me no good."

"It takes a very long time to make any one good," answered her mother, "so you must not be disheartened even if you do find the same bad feelings returning again and again. I dare say you have been dreaming of having a large house like Rochford Park, and quantities of money to spend just as you please; and now, when you find you must be contented with a small house, and very little money, you are unhappy."

"I don't want it all for myself," said Amy.

"But even for others," replied Mrs. Herbert, "you desire to give them something that God has thought fit they should not have; which do you think knows best what is good?"

"Oh, mamma! indeed I am sure that God is wiser than any one; but I cannot help wishing."

"Do you remember, Amy, the promise you have so often repeated to me; I mean, the promise made for you at your baptism, that you would renounce 'the pomps and vanities of this wicked world?'"

"But, mamma, I do not want any pomp; I should not care to be a queen, and it would make me miserable to have any thing to do with what was wicked."

"My dear," said Mrs. Herbert, "the pomps and vanities of the world are different to different people. If Susan Reynolds, for instance, were anxious to live in this cottage, and wear a silk dress like yours, she would be longing for pomps and vanities, because she would be coveting something beyond her station; and so, when you are desiring to live at Emmerton or Rochford Park, you are equally wrong."

"Then why does my uncle live at such a large place, and have so many servants and carriages, if he has promised to renounce them?" asked Amy. "Is it wicked?"

"No," answered Mrs. Herbert, "it is not wicked in him, because they are things proper to the station in which God has placed him. A king must live in grandeur, so must a nobleman; it is befitting their dignity; and private gentlemen, when they have large fortunes, are obliged to do the same, only in a less degree. But such persons have a very difficult task assigned them, as it is almost incumbent upon them to maintain a certain degree of splendour in their style of living; and yet, God will assuredly one day call them strictly to account for any wilful extravagance or self-indulgence."

"But why was the promise made for them if they never can keep it?" said Amy.

"Because," replied her mother, "renouncing does not mean that we are to give up all the blessings which God has bestowed upon us ; but it does mean that we are not to pride ourselves upon them, or rest our happiness on them, or covet more than we possess. It means that we should use them entirely for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, that we should be perfectly willing to part with them if God were to require it, and should be as happy in a cottage with only bread to eat, as we should be in a palace."

"Oh, mamma ! no one can feel so."

"Look, Amy," said Mrs. Herbert, taking up the Bible which she had been reading during her child's absence ; "have you never seen this before ? 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !' and 'It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.'" (Luke, xviii. 24, 25.) These are our Saviour's words ; do you think that any one who really believed they were true could wish for riches ?"

Amy hid her face on her mother's shoulder, and her tears again fell fast. Mrs. Herbert went on. "It is quite necessary, my dear child," she said, "that you should learn what you wish for, before you indulge in any dreams of greatness. You are desiring what, our Saviour says, makes it almost impossible for a person to enter into heaven ; and you yourself have just acknowledged that it must be the case. I told you the disposition of mind which God requires of us ; that, if we have riches, we should be ready in a moment to part with them, and be quite contented without them, and you immediately exclaimed that it could not be ; and yet God will not own us as his children unless we have this spirit, or at least strive very hard to obtain it."

"Mamma," said Amy in a low voice, "indeed, I will try not to wish any more."

"I am sure you will, my love," replied her mother; "and I am sure, also, that if you pray to God, He will assist you; but it will require very many attempts before you can succeed. And will you remember also how vain and foolish it is for those who are the children of God, and look forward to living with Him in heaven, to set their hearts upon any thing this world can give! You would laugh if you saw a person who was one day to possess a kingdom, sighing for a little cottage, or a small garden; but the most glorious kingdom that could be given us here, even the world itself, is nothing when compared with what God has promised us hereafter."

"If I could but see it for one moment," said Amy, "I should never wish again."

"Yes," answered her mother, "if we were to see it, our difficulty would be at an end: but God has placed us here to try us; to prove whether we will believe that we shall have what He has promised, though whilst we are on earth it is hidden from us. If I told you that to-morrow you would have a splendid present made you, but that I could not shew it to you to-day, would you not believe me?"

"Oh, yes," replied Amy, "you always keep your word."

"And if I read to you in God's word, the description of the beautiful home in which, our Saviour tells us, we shall one day live, will you not believe Him?" But Amy did not answer, for her heart was full. "I will not talk any more to you now, my dear child," continued Mrs. Herbert; "but I will read to you presently those two concluding chapters in the last book in the Bible, which you have only occasionally heard. They will do far more to calm your mind, than any thing I can say."

Amy went to her room ; and the last sound that mingled with her dreams, was her mother's gentle voice, as she sat by the bedside, describing to her in the words of the Bible, the blessedness of that glorious city, which shall have no "need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it ; for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof."

CHAP. XI.

THE autumn months passed quickly away, and brought but little change in Amy's life, except that her visits to Emmerton became less frequent, as the uncertainty of the weather obliged her to depend more upon her uncle's carriage; but she still practised her music under her mother's direction, and copied Miss Morton's drawings at home, and made up by diligence for the superior advantages which her cousins enjoyed. The London plan had been often mentioned, but, as Margaret foretold, Mrs. Harrington was decidedly opposed to it, and became at last quite annoyed whenever any reference was made to it; and the idea would probably have completely died away, had it not been for Miss Cunningham, who, notwithstanding the distance between Emmerton and the park, contrived to be a very constant visitor; and whenever she appeared, London was invariably the theme of conversation. There needed no description, however, to excite Margaret's wishes, and Dora would have been equally anxious, if her dislike to Miss Cunningham had not prevented her from entering into any scheme of enjoyment in which she was to participate. But Miss Cunningham's earnestness on the subject did not exhaust itself in mere words. Her first object had been to induce her papa to urge the scheme on Mrs. Harrington as often as they met, and when, after many trials, this was found to fail, the only thing that remained was to get rid of the one great obstacle, Emily Morton. Lord Rochford was persuaded to

criticise her drawings, to find fault with her style of playing, and to declare that her voice was extremely indifferent, in the hope that Mrs. Harrington might at last yield to the necessity of having better instruction for her daughters. But Mrs. Harrington was not so easily deceived; she was far too good a judge of both music and drawing, to be influenced by what Lord Rochford said, and only answered him with cool indifference in public, and laughed at his ignorance in private. Yet Margaret and her friend did not despair. There was one resource left; though Mrs. Harrington could not be persuaded to part with Miss Morton, Miss Morton might be induced to leave Mrs. Harrington; and when this notion entered their heads, a series of petty persecutions commenced according to a plan that had been determined on at Rochford Park, which, with any other disposition, could hardly have failed of success. But Miss Morton was invulnerable; she felt that it was her duty to remain at Emmerton; and without paying any attention to looks and innuendoes, or even open words, she pursued her round of daily duties with the same unruffled temper, the same cheerful smile, as if her life had been one of uninterrupted happiness. The only difference observable was during Miss Cunningham's visits, when she generally spent as much of her time with Rose in her own room as was possible; and this, quite as much on the little girl's account as on her own; for Miss Cunningham, having just cleverness sufficient to discover that Rose was Miss Morton's great interest and anxiety, endeavoured to interfere with her in every possible way, distracting her attention from any thing in which she might be engaged, and teasing her so much, that even Dora's indignation was at length roused. Of all this, Amy saw but little. The days were now so short that she had only time to take

her lesson and return home ; but she could not help observing it occasionally, and then longed to be Miss Morton's friend, and to be a comfort to her ; and still more did she wish that Emily could be often with her mamma, and be enabled to tell her all she was suffering. But to this there was an obstacle, which Miss Morton would have felt, though Amy was not sensible of it. To have repeated all that passed at Emmerton, would have been in her eyes betraying the secrecy in some degree necessary in private life, and to Mrs. Harrington's sister it would have been quite impossible. If there were a complaint to be made, Mrs. Harrington was the person to whom to apply for the remedy ; and if she did not choose to do this, it could not be right to seek assistance from any other person ; and thus, day after day, Emily bore silently and meekly the scorn of folly and ignorance, with but one friend to guide her, one hope to cheer her, and yet feeling that that Friend and that hope, were sufficient in all things for her comfort. Mrs. Herbert's interest in Miss Morton had been much excited by Amy's account, and she was induced to think over many plans that might render her life happier. The undertaking, however, was a difficult one, for it was impossible to intrude on her confidence ; and there were few opportunities for gaining it, as Mrs. Harrington always made some objection to her going to the cottage. Perhaps she feared that Miss Morton's history of her life at Emmerton might not sound favourably in her sister's ears ; but, whatever might be the cause, the dislike became so apparent, that Mrs. Herbert gave up all hope of being useful, until the idea of an introduction to Mrs. Walton suggested itself to her mind. In her Miss Morton would find every thing that she could require ; warm affection, superior judgment, and the advice and sympathy which Mrs. Herbert's

position rendered it impossible to give ; and with such a friend at hand, there would be comparatively little to fear for Emily's comfort.

Of Mrs. Walton's willingness to cultivate the acquaintance, Mrs. Herbert had no doubt. It seemed impossible, indeed, that any one could look at Emily Morton without feeling the deepest interest in her : yet the charm was not that of mere personal beauty ; many might have criticised the colour of her hair and eyes, and found fault with her pale, transparent complexion, but none could be insensible to the simple grace of her manner, the musical sweetness of her voice, and above all the calm, soft expression of countenance, which was but the outward sign of that "meek and quiet spirit," which, the Bible says, "is in the sight of God of great price." Without Mrs. Herbert's recommendation, Emily would have been a welcome visitor at the Rectory ; but with it, Mrs. Walton's feelings were so much excited in her favour, that even Amy was quite satisfied as to her being properly appreciated, though she still longed that her mamma could know her more intimately.

But Miss Morton was not Amy's only object of compassion at the hall. As Christmas approached, Dora's spirits evidently sank ; she became more silent and abstracted, took little interest in what was passing ; and if any remark was made upon her low spirits, either roused herself to a forced gaiety, or shut herself up in her own room, and remained there for a considerable time. Amy longed to ask what was the matter, but she did not dare ; and they now met so seldom, that the hope of discovering it seemed vain. It was therefore a cause of satisfaction to her, independent of her own enjoyment, to hear that it was Mr. Harrington's wish, that the week before and the week after Christmas should be

spent by her mamma and herself at Emmerton, as she was certain the arrangement would give pleasure to Emily Morton, and thought it possible that her mamma might be some comfort to her cousin. Dora was the first to give her the intelligence ; but although she declared it would be very nice to have Amy staying there, and expressed a hope that her aunt would be comfortable, she did not really seem to care much about it.

"It will not be gay as it used to be at Wayland," she said ; "there we always had the house full of people, but now there are only a few coming, whom I know nothing about : I believe we are to have some boys, and two or three girls, but we have scarcely ever seen them. Two of the boys are the young Dornfords, and, besides, there will be the Miss Stanleys, and Mary Warner, and the little Danvers ; but I shall hate it, for I don't know what we shall do with them."

"Frank will amuse Mr. Dornford's boys," said Amy, who knew all their names though she had never been accustomed to visit in the neighbourhood.

"Yes ! but Frank is not used to it."

"Don't look so very unhappy, dear Dora," replied Amy ; "I cannot bear to see it ; you always seem out of spirits now, and I would give any thing in the world if I could help you."

"Would you," said Dora, looking at her earnestly ; "that is more than half the people I know would say."

"But it is true ; only, of course, I cannot be any good to you."

"No one can be any good to me now ; I knew I should be wretched when Christmas came."

"But why ?" asked Amy.

"O ! never mind," said Dora, rather hastily, "I

can't talk about it ; please don't say any thing to any body."

" But if you would talk to some one else, would not that help you ? "

" Whom should I talk to ? " said Dora.

" Do you never tell your mamma when you are unhappy ? " continued Amy, though she felt that to have asked for sympathy from Mrs. Harrington in her own case would have been impossible.

" Talk to mamma ! " exclaimed Dora ; " why, I could more easily be miserable all the days of my life ; besides," she added, " I said no one could help me ; no one can bring back " — the sentence remained unfinished, for her voice was choked, and her eyes were blinded with tears.

Amy had always hitherto felt in a certain degree afraid of shewing any affection to Dora : her manner was in general so cold, that she never knew how far it would be returned ; but the sight of her present distress was quite sufficient to overcome every feeling of the kind, and putting her arm round her cousin's neck, she said very gently, " But he is so happy now."

Dora hid her face in her hands, and did not answer for several minutes ; at last, rousing herself with a great effort, she said, " Amy, I am very cross to you sometimes."

" Oh no ! " replied Amy, " don't think about that ; you know we are all cross occasionally."

" He was never cross to any one," said Dora, in a voice so low, that it sounded as if she were speaking to herself.

" Miss Morton told me how good and kind he was," replied Amy, " and how miserable you were when he was taken ill."

" Did she ? " exclaimed Dora with interest ; " I did not know she ever thought about me."

"Oh Dora! indeed, I am sure she does think about you a great deal, and would love you very much, if——"

"If what? why should you be afraid of speaking out?"

"If you would love her," continued Amy, hesitatingly.

"It would be no use if I did;" replied Dora, "she is as cold as a stone to every one but Rose and you, and as proud as a queen."

"But she spoke of you so kindly the other day, and said that she could not bear to see you in such bad spirits, and that she was so sorry about poor Edward; and then she told me that in some things she thought you were like him."

"Me! no indeed, nobody could think that: he was like no one else."

"Not Frank?" asked Amy, anxious to make her cousin converse upon the subject she knew was uppermost in her thoughts.

"No," replied Dora; "Frank is thoughtless and hasty; but *he* never said a harsh word to any one, not to me even!"

"It would have been hard to speak crossly to you, when you were so fond of him," said Amy.

"Ah! you don't know," answered Dora, while a host of recollections flashed across her mind, of taunting looks, and angry words, and selfish actions, which at the time were thought of as nothing, but which now stood forth in their true light. For a short time she was silent; and then turning abruptly to Amy, she said, "Then you will come next Monday: Aunt Herbert is to have the green room and the boudoir, and you are to have the dressing room."

Amy was vexed, she longed to continue the conversation about Edward; and she was always

pleased and interested when Dora spoke of her own feelings, for it seemed as if she were then admitted to a secret, which no one else was allowed to share. "I shall like it very much if mamma will consent, and if you will be happy," she said; "only I wish there were to be no strangers."

"Don't think about me," replied Dora, "and pray don't say any thing about my being out of spirits; I shall do very well by and bye."

"I wish Frank were here," said Amy.

"Frank will do no good, only make a noise: but I shall be happy again after Christmas; I did not think half so much about it a month ago, and not even when first I came here, because every thing was new; but he always came home about this time, and I used to look forward to it so; at last I quite counted the days."

Amy saw how hopeless it was to attempt to comfort her cousin; she could only show by looks and manner the pain she felt at her unhappiness; and with this Dora was quite satisfied. Amy's silent sympathy was consoling, where words would have distressed her; but it was not natural to her to speak much of her own feelings, and again she turned the conversation to the intended visit.

"If you come on Monday," she said, "we shall have a few days to ourselves, for no one is to be here till after Friday, which is Christmas Day."

"And will they all come together?" asked Amy.

"No; that is what provokes me so. If there were a good many, they would entertain each other; but I can't imagine what we shall do with two or three. I think I shall try again to make mamma alter the plan."

"But you will have Margaret to help you."

"She will be worse than nothing; for Lord Rochford and Miss Cunningham are to come on

Saturday, and you know very well, that when they are here, Margaret will think of nothing else."

"Is Miss Cunningham really coming," asked Amy, looking very blank.

Dora laughed. "You should not let your face tell such tales, Amy; now I speak out at once, and say, I can't endure her, and you had much better do the same."

"No," replied Amy, "I don't like to do it unless I am obliged, and I dare say a great deal of the fault is my own; but I care much more about Miss Morton than any thing else; Miss Cunningham treats her so ill."

"Yes, she makes even me angry sometimes, and you know I am not in love with your dear Emily."

"You like her better than you will own though," said Amy, looking gaily in her cousin's face, "and a great deal better than you did."

"I don't know; I don't dislike her always; and I cannot bear to see that Lucy Cunningham tormenting her so."

"And to-morrow you will not dislike her at all," continued Amy; "and the next day you will take her part, and the day after you will quite love her."

"No, I shall never love her. I am sure I am much more given to hating than loving. I am not like you, Amy, who seem to care for every thing, and every body."

"Not every thing," said Amy, laughing: "your ugly tabby cat, for instance, Dora, I never could love that."

"Oh! that is compassion: I only pet her because all the rest abuse her."

"And Miss Morton, it is just the same with her."

Dora shook her head. "It is no use, Amy," she answered. "You know very well, that if I were to

begin loving Emily Morton now, and to go on for the rest of my life, she never could like me in return."

"And why not?"

"Because — because — I cannot tell why; but I am sure she could not."

"Oh Dora!" said Amy, "I do not think you can guess how good Miss Morton is, or how easily she would forgive."

"Forgive!" exclaimed Dora quickly, "what should she forgive?"

Amy blushed deeply; "I beg your pardon, Dora, only I thought you meant —"

"Well! go on; meant what?"

"Don't be angry with me, dear Dora, only I thought, perhaps, you fancied that Miss Morton would not like you, because sometimes, you know, you show that you do not like her."

"You had better say it in plain words," exclaimed Dora, whilst the working of her forehead showed the storm that was gathering; "because sometimes — no — very often, you know you are very cross."

"No Dora," replied Amy, gently; "I do not wish to say it in any other words; it would be wrong in me, for you know it is not my place to tell you you are cross; and besides, I am often cross myself."

"But you meant it, I know you meant it; just say now whether you did."

"I wish you would not ask me any thing about it; I did not mean to vex you, and I was careless when I spoke."

"You were, indeed," said Dora; "and perhaps, the next time, you will think twice before you accuse persons who are older than yourself."

Amy was about to vindicate herself, but she had learnt from Miss Morton to bear an unjust accu-

sation patiently, when she knew that excuses would only increase anger; and again begging Dora's pardon, and saying she was very sorry for having annoyed her, she began putting her drawing materials together, and preparing to return home. Dora's first impulse was to leave the room; but she was so well aware of having been harsh, that she could not quite make up her mind to go, and she lingered about, first taking up a book, and then looking out of the window, and longing for Amy to say something, though it was too great an effort to do so herself. Amy, however, still continued silent; and at length, when every thing was collected, went up stairs to put on her bonnet and cloak. Dora, lately, had been in the habit of assisting her; but now, instead of accompanying her, she seated herself by the fire, and tried to read, though without being able to fix her attention. In a few minutes Amy reappeared, and holding out her hand to her cousin, told her that her donkey was at the door, and she must go directly.

"Good-by," said Dora, in a cold, constrained voice, which gave no symptom of the struggle within.

Amy looked distressed. "Are you angry with me, still?" she asked.

"Angry! why should I be angry?"

"Because I spoke so thoughtlessly."

"Oh!" said Dora, "it is not worth while to be angry at such a trifle. Good-by."

"I cannot go in this way; it makes me so unhappy not to be forgiven," said Amy.

"Well!" replied Dora, "I forgive you; are you satisfied now?"

"No," said Amy, sadly, "because I don't think it is real forgiveness; I wish I could do any thing to show you that I am sorry."

"Will you kiss me?" asked Dora, whose proud spirit was almost entirely subdued by her cousin's meekness, though she could not yet bring herself to confess she had been in fault. Amy's answer was a kiss, so hearty, that Dora's impulse was to return it equally; and then, for almost the first time in her life, she said voluntarily, "Amy, you were right and I was wrong."

Amy felt this was true, though she would not say so at such a moment; it would have seemed too much like a triumph. "We can settle that next time I come," she answered, smiling; "I care for nothing now, but keeping Stephen and my donkey waiting in the cold; give me one more kiss." The kiss was given, and Amy ran off quite happy, whilst Dora, though not equally light-hearted, felt as if a burden had been taken from her mind; and after waiting for a few moments enjoying the unusual luxury of humility, she followed her cousin to see that she was carefully protected against the cold. Mrs. Bridget came forward to offer her services, but Dora wished to do every thing herself; and Amy declared herself so comfortable, she thought her ride would be really enjoyable, notwithstanding the north wind. There was one disappointment, however, awaiting her. Stephen had been attacked by his old enemy, the gout, and was kept a prisoner to his cottage; so that she had no resource but her own thoughts, the man servant who attended, keeping at a distance, and only approaching to open the gates, move away the straggling boughs of the trees in the forest, or help to wrap the cloak more closely around her, when the keen blast, which seemed to meet them in every direction, blew with more than ordinary violence.

CHAP. XII.

ON the day which Dora had named, Mrs. Herbert and Amy were established at the Hall. Amy, in great delight, looked round upon the preparations that had been made for her mamma's comfort; and could not doubt, as she felt that some of her first wishes were realised in the prospect of spending so many days at Emmerton together, that Mrs. Herbert would enjoy it equally with herself. And certainly, if luxury could constitute a person's happiness, there would have been nothing to desire. "Oh mamma," she said, drawing the easy chair close to the fire, "there is every thing we want here, just the same as at the cottage; I can make you so comfortable when you are tired; and you can lie down, and look out at that beautiful view. There is the spire of Emmerton church just in front; it seems almost prettier now, when the snow is on the ground, than it was in the summer."

"You aunt has been very thoughtful," replied Mrs. Herbert; "but I hope I shall feel well enough to be much with her; only we can spend the morning together, just as if we were at home."

"Yes," said Amy; "and you will be able to see Miss Morton whenever you wish it; and perhaps Margaret and Dora will come and sit with us sometimes. Oh mamma! it will be so nice!"

"Look, Amy," said Mrs. Herbert, pointing to the well-filled book-shelves: "there will be occupation for us both, when we have nothing else to do."

Amy began examining the books with interest, and suddenly exclaimed, "Mamma, it must be Dora who has made every thing so comfortable for us ; here are all the books that I like best ; and I remember the last day I came to Emmerton, she made me tell her the names of a great many, and I could not imagine why."

"And these flowers, are they the result of Dora's care, do you think ?" said Mrs. Herbert ; "she must have gathered all there were in the conservatory ; it is quite strange to see them when the snow is on the ground."

"It must be Dora," replied Amy ; "I don't think aunt Harrington or Margaret ever even look at flowers. I never saw Margaret take one in her hand, except to pull it to pieces ; and there is Dora's own letter case, and the beautiful inkstand her uncle Henry gave her."

"I wish Dora would come and see the pleasure she has given us," said Mrs. Herbert.

"I think she went away," answered Amy ; "because she fancied you were tired, and would rather be alone with me at first ; for she begged I would come to her in the school-room when I left you."

"I should like to rest now," replied Mrs. Herbert ; "so you may go and tell her how comfortable I am, and then, by and by, I will thank her myself."

Amy quitted the room, and Mrs. Herbert endeavoured to compose herself to sleep ; but her thoughts were too busy. Whatever might be Amy's pleasure at coming to Emmerton, she could not, herself, entirely sympathise with it ; and yet, with her perfect freedom from selfishness, she would have imposed any restraint upon her own feelings rather than mar the enjoyment of her child. Dora's thoughtfulness brought vividly to her remembrance the

days of her childhood, when she and her sister Edith had delighted in attending to the comfort of others in a similar manner; and visions of those sunny days passed before her, one after the other, recalling forms and faces, even voices and words, which had since been almost forgotten. A gentle knock at the door interrupted her reverie, and Mr. Harrington begged for admittance. He came to see that every thing had been provided for his sister's comfort, and expressed great satisfaction at Dora's care; and then seating himself by her side, they enjoyed for the next half hour the pleasure of talking together of their early days; and notwithstanding the melancholy reflections which naturally arose from the conversation, the relief of his sympathy with her present feelings was so great, that Mrs. Herbert felt more comforted and refreshed when he left her, than she could have been by any other means.

Amy, during this time, had found her way to the school-room, and expressed her gratitude to Dora in the warmest terms; but the subject did not appear quite agreeable to her, for she turned it off quickly, though a close observer might have discovered from the expression of her countenance, that she really felt extreme pleasure. Margaret welcomed her cousin most affectionately, as she always did when no one else was near to attract her attention; but, by this time, Amy had learnt the true value of her words and caresses, and withdrew herself as soon as possible, feeling that Dora's coldness, even if it were real, was infinitely preferable to Margaret's warmth.

"I have been begging mamma, to have all the stupid people together, next week," said Dora, when Amy began inquiring what had been decided on since she was last there: "and she is almost in-

clined to do it; if they would come on Monday, and stay till Thursday, it would not be so bad; and if she would ask two or three more, I am sure we should get on better."

"I will tell you who is coming on Saturday," said Margaret; "somebody you will be delighted to see."

"Me!" exclaimed Amy, in astonishment; "Why, I don't know any one."

"Oh! but you do. What do you say to your friend, Mr. Cunningham?" Poor Amy looked very uncomfortable. "Yes," continued Margaret, laughing; "and you will have to talk to him all day long, for Lucy says he has taken such a fancy to you; he declares you are the best mannered little thing he ever met with; and, you know, it is so rare a thing for him to see any one who is well-mannered to him, that he will be sure to seize upon you all the time he is here."

"And how long does he stay?" asked Amy.

"As long as Lord Rochford does; it will be a week at least."

"You had better go back to the cottage, Amy," said Dora; "there will be no comfort for you here. I can just imagine how Mr. Cunningham will pet you, and talk to you, and how frightened you will look: if it were not for your annoyance, I should quite enjoy the thoughts of seeing you together."

"One thing I like him for," said Amy, "he has so much good nature."

"Yes," replied Dora; "he seems to have taken so much, that there is none left for his sister; and now, Amy, she will be worse than ever to you, for she hates you cordially, because her brother said, after you were gone, that he thought being with you would do her a great deal of good."

"I don't see what business Mr. Cunningham has

to think any thing of the kind," said Margaret. "I don't mean to be ill-natured, Amy; but, really, the idea of your being of use to Miss Cunningham, is rather too absurd."

"I think so too," replied Amy; "but I dare say he was only in joke."

"Oh no! he was not; he was quite sincere; and he told Lucy that if the London plan came to any thing, he hoped an arrangement would be made for you to be of the party."

"And so Miss Cunningham is your enemy for life," said Dora; "not that there is any fear of the London plan, for mamma is more strongly set against it than ever."

"It is half your fault, Dora," observed Margaret; "I am sure there would be less difficulty, if you were to say you liked it; but you are always speaking against it, and lately, too, you have taken to upholding Emily Morton."

"I don't see," replied Dora, "why I should say what is not true for any one, least of all for Miss Cunningham, who knows quite well how to do it for herself." Amy looked vexed, and Dora's conscience immediately told her she was wrong. "I don't mean to say," she continued, "that Lucy Cunningham tells stories exactly, but she often twists and turns things to suit her own purpose, and she can exaggerate without the smallest difficulty."

"Lucy Cunningham is very much obliged to you for your opinion of her," said Margaret, sharply; "and I shall take care to tell her what a friend she has in you."

"As you please; but she is not worth quarrelling about. I shall be quite glad when she is gone to London, and then we shall hear no more about her. I hate having nothing but Lucy Cunningham din-din-ed into my ears from morning till night."

"It is better than Emily Morton, at any rate," said Margaret, with a half-contemptuous glance at Amy. "*One* is a lady."

"Oh Margaret!" exclaimed Amy, while the colour rushed to her face; "you don't mean to say that Miss Morton is not a lady."

"I mean that she is not half so much of a lady as Lucy Cunningham: of course she must be something like one, or mamma would not let her be with us."

"But indeed, Margaret," replied Amy, trying to speak calmly, "I do think you must be wrong. I am sure if a stranger saw them together, they would say directly there was no comparison between them."

"But what has that to do with it?" said Margaret. "It cannot alter the case. Lucy Cunningham is the daughter of a nobleman."

"Yes, but that is not every thing."

"And Emily Morton is a governess," continued Margaret in a decided tone, as if there could be no arguing against such a truth.

"Yes," again repeated Amy; "and yet, if Miss Cunningham were a princess, it would make no difference in my feelings."

"Then your feelings must be wrong, and all the world would say the same."

"I am sure Miss Morton is more of a lady, because she is so gentle and kind," said Amy, "and she always thinks of other people before herself, and never gets out of temper, and never boasts of any thing."

"Well! but those are virtues: you talk so foolishly, Amy. Susan Reynolds or Morris may be all that, but they would not be at all the more ladies."

"No," said Dora, coming to Amy's assistance; "they would not be ladies, because they would still have clumsy, awkward ways of doing things, and of speaking."

"Of course, that is just what I was saying," exclaimed Margaret triumphantly.

"No; but Margaret," persisted Amy, "indeed that is not what you were saying; for I am sure Miss Cunningham is much more awkward than Miss Morton, and yet you say that all the world would consider her superior."

"So they would," replied Margaret.

Amy was silent for a few minutes; at length she said, "Mamma told me one day that we ought not to think as the world thinks, because the world means generally a great many vain, silly persons."

"Then you would set up to be wiser and better than every body else, I suppose," said Margaret.

Dora again interposed, for she thought she saw what her cousin meant. "Amy is right, I am sure: it would be only silly people who would think so much more of Lucy Cunningham's birth, than of other things. Not all the rank in the world will make persons ladies and gentlemen without manners."

"But I mean something besides manners," said Amy; "because, what I like in Miss Morton is not quite manner; it is her being good that helps to make her a lady, I think."

Dora laughed. "That is one of your strange notions, Amy. I believe you think, that what you call being good, is to make a person every thing—rich, and happy, and ladylike, and beautiful."

"No, not beautiful," replied Amy: "and yet," she added, "I remember once going with mamma to see a poor woman who was very ill; and she was almost ugly, till she began to talk, and thank mamma for being kind to her, and then her face quite changed; and mamma told me it was her being so grateful and contented that made her look so nice."

"I do think, Amy, you will go out of your

senses some day," said Margaret. "You talk so differently from every one else."

"Do I? That is very strange; for all the persons I care for tell me the same things."

"Does Emily Morton?" asked Dora.

"Yes; whenever I am quite alone with her, and ask her about any thing, grave things, I mean."

"Well, Amy," said Dora, "I must say that you are the merriest grave girl I ever met with. I don't think any one who heard you laugh, would fancy you really so demure as you are."

"No one ever said I was grave, except you," answered Amy. "I am sure I don't know what I am myself; but I must not stay here now, for I want so much to see Miss Morton, and then I must go back to mamma."

"Always Emily Morton," said Margaret, as Amy ran out of the room.

"Always Lucy Cunningham," retorted Dora.

"No more of that, pray Dora. You know very well, that the reason you laugh is because you are jealous of her being fonder of me than of you."

"Jealous! Me jealous of her! with her sandy hair and freckled —" but here Dora stopped.

"Well!" exclaimed Margaret, who always felt a secret satisfaction at Miss Cunningham's plain face, though she would not acknowledge it to herself; "I thought you professed not to care about beauty: to be sure, Lucy is not lovely."

"I do not wish to say any thing more about her," said Dora, "for I generally get angry; only I would give something if she were not coming here on Saturday."

Margaret had not time to reply before Dora was gone, for she had lately learnt to distrust her powers of self-command, and to think silence preferable to argument. The next few days were spent

by Amy in great enjoyment: every thing went smoothly and pleasantly. Dora was thoughtful and kind, Margaret in good humour, her uncle affectionate, and her aunt seldom in her way; and, above all, Emily Morton was admitted to her mamma's room, and from their long conversations, and Emily's expressions of gratitude and interest, it was quite evident that she began to consider Mrs. Herbert in the light of a real friend. Not that the conversations which passed between them were at all such as Amy imagined: there was very little said about Emmerton, still less about Mrs. Harrington; but Mrs. Herbert led Emily to talk of her father and mother, her aunt, her early home, and her childish days; and gave her some valuable advice as to the manner in which persons in her position should conduct themselves, without obliging her to make complaints, which, considering her own near connexion with Mrs. Harrington, would have been awkward and wrong.

Amongst Amy's pleasures during this happy time, one of the greatest was a visit to the rectory with Miss Morton, on the afternoon preceding Christmas Day. Their reception was even more affectionate than usual; and as they walked home, the distance seemed only too short, while she listened to Emily's praises of the persons whom next to her mamma she most loved and venerated.

"To-morrow will be Christmas Day," she said, as she lingered in Miss Morton's room on her return; "and the next day Miss Cunningham will be here: so I suppose we shall not be able to get a walk to the rectory again, yet; but if you would tell me when you go out, that I may be with you if I can, I should be so very glad. You know I like you so much better than Miss Cunningham."

"I doubt if Miss Cunningham is a favourite with

any one but your cousin Margaret," was the reply ; "but she has so much to spoil her, that I do not think we ought to be hard upon her."

"It is so odd that you should pity her, as you always do," said Amy. "Now, I should like so much to be her, that is not herself, but to be my own self, with her rank and fortune ; and then I would get such a pretty little room for you, and you should come and live with me, if you would."

"And do nothing all day but amuse myself?"

"No, not that. I know you never would bear to do nothing ; but you should teach me music and drawing, as you do now, and we might have Rose with us, too : it would be so nice."

"And it is so nice to teach you music and drawing, and to have Rose with me, and to live in a comfortable little room. You see, I have it all."

"Ah ! yes," said Amy : "but then there are some things, now,—tiresome, dreadful things, which you never should have to bear if you lived with me. And I would love you so dearly, so very dearly."

Miss Morton drew Amy more closely to her, and gave her one of those kisses which she had lately begun to value far more than any words.

"I should grieve very much," she said, "if I did not think you loved me dearly now : there are but few left in the world who do."

"But you have mamma to love you, besides," said Amy ; "and Mrs. Walton, I am sure she must be fond of you ; and sometimes, perhaps, she will ask you to stay at the rectory ; and mamma and I can go there, too, and then there will be no one to interrupt. I am so glad Miss Cunningham does not know Mrs. Walton."

"Perhaps, so am I too," said Emily, smiling : "but we must try and be agreeable to her on Saturday."

"Ah! Saturday," repeated Amy, sighing; "all my pleasure will be over then—real, quiet pleasure, I mean. On Monday the other people come, and Dora says, that as I am her cousin, I shall be expected to help entertain them. But I never did entertain any one in my life: I don't quite know what it means: I suppose it is talking and showing pictures; but one can't do that all day."

"Your cousin Frank comes to-night," replied Emily, laughing; "and he is so merry, that he will take half the trouble off your hands."

Amy's face brightened. "I forgot that; but then they are girls; boys cannot entertain girls. I do think if I had but a fairy's wand, I should strike them all as they came into the house, and change them into boys, and set them to play at football and leap-frog, and all the trouble would be over. But I am not Dora; and if they are dull, they will not complain of me."

Susan Reynolds here interrupted them with a message from Mrs. Herbert; and Amy left Miss Morton with her mind in an uncomfortable state, having forgotten the pleasure of her visit to the rectory, and thinking only of the difficulties of the next week, and of all the strange faces she was to see.

CHAP. XIII.

THE morning of Christmas Day was in every respect as bright and beautiful as Amy could possibly have desired. The clear sky was unclouded, and its brilliant blue was rendered only the more lovely, from its contrast with the leafless branches which were pencilled against it. The lawn glittered like a sheet of silver, and the dark hues of the holly and the laurel exhibited in full perfection the richness of the crimson berries, and the delicacy of the pure hoar frost with which they were covered. There was an elastic feeling in the air, which would have given strength and refreshment even to the weary watcher by the bed of sickness. All nature seemed to rejoice, and Amy awoke to rejoice also. Too young to have anxiety for the future, or sorrow for the past, she felt only that she was in the place she most delighted in, under the care of the mother whose only wish was for her happiness, and surrounded by all the means of enjoyment that wealth could give. True, the wealth was not her own; but it was, at that moment, entirely devoted to her comfort, and the present was too full of pleasure to leave any space for envy and discontent. Even the remembrance of her father could not check the gaiety of her spirit, for she had not yet learnt to feel that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Every day brought with it the expectation of hearing from him; and when the expectation was disappointed, there was left in its stead, not the

wretchedness of doubt, but the blessing of hope for the morrow.

Her first thought on that morning was given to her mother; the next to her cousin Frank: he had arrived late the night before, so late, that she had been only able to remark the mixture of delight at his return home, and sad recollection of the one missing, who ought to have welcomed him, which had been shown by all, and by none more than Dora; and Mrs. Herbert, unwilling to be any restraint upon them, had sent Amy to bed, and soon after retired herself.

This had been rather disappointing; but Amy had satisfied herself that he seemed very lively, and was more like Margaret than Dora; and for any further knowledge she was obliged to wait in patience till the breakfast hour. It was usual for her cousins to breakfast in the school-room with Miss Morton; but on Christmas Day there was an exception to almost every general rule, and they were all to be together, even Miss Morton being admitted as one of the party, although the little attention that was shown her, nothing indeed beyond the merest civility, made it an occasion of far more pain than pleasure.

Frank, when he appeared, was in the highest possible spirits, full of his school adventures, and the characters of his playfellows, and told several stories in the regular school-boy slang, which Amy could not at all understand; but his presence took off much of the stiffness and restraint which every one else seemed to feel before Mrs. Harrington; and she herself occasionally relaxed into something like a smile as she listened to his merry laugh. Amy had rather dreaded the society of a boy: she had never been accustomed to it, and imagined he must be boisterous and rude; but with all his

spirits, Frank Harrington was still so gentlemanly that she soon felt at ease.

"Will the carriage be wanted to go to church this morning?" said Mr. Harrington. "Amy, my dear, do you think your mamma will venture out this cold weather?"

Amy was afraid not: she had been to her mamma's room, and had found her so tired and unwell, that it was most probable she would not come down stairs till the middle of the day.

An expression of anxiety and disappointment came over Mr. Harrington's countenance. "That is bad news for Christmas Day," he said. "I would give a great deal, Amy, to procure your dear mamma such a bright colour as you have. I well remember the time when she would have walked to Emmerton Church and back, twice, and laughed at the notion of being tired afterwards."

"Every one in these days is grown weak and sickly," said Mrs. Harrington, in her usual severe manner; "that is, if they are not so really, they fancy it."

Amy thought this might be meant for her mamma; and she would certainly have said something in reply, but for the fear of being disrespectful.

Mr. Harrington, however, had no such fear; and answered, that he should be very glad to believe Mrs. Herbert's illness imaginary, for it would take a most painful load off his mind.

"But she is better, a great deal, than she was, uncle," said Amy; "she walked several times round the shrubbery at the cottage, the day before we came here, and did not seem at all tired afterwards."

"Several times round a shrubbery, Amy," exclaimed Frank: "why that must be a walk for a snail. What do you say to a walk of six miles and back before breakfast? I know a boy who did it

just to buy a new cricket-bat; and a fine scrape he got into when he was found out."

Amy looked all proper surprise at such a wonderful feat; and Frank, delighted at finding a new auditor, kept her for the next quarter of an hour, repeating his most extraordinary adventures, with such spirit, that Amy at last began to think there would be more amusement in being a boy, and going to a public school, than even in the possession of all the splendour which usually formed the subject of her day-dreams. The church bells prevented any further conversation, and she was glad to escape from Frank's merriment for the enjoyment of a quiet walk with Miss Morton, who had more than ordinary pleasure in being with her on this morning, from having felt so much alone in the midst of a family party. Christmas Day had never been to her what it is to many, for she had never known the happiness of having all her relations about her: but she could recollect the time when it was spent at home, with her father and mother; and she sighed now to think how little the blessing had then been valued.

Amy was walking with her cousins in the rectory garden, which adjoined the churchyard, when Mr. Walton came to her, after the conclusion of the service, to inquire for her mamma.

"And your uncle too, my dear," he said; "I want very much to see him: what can have become of him?"

"There he is," said Amy, pointing to a group of persons standing by the gate: "he is talking to Mr. Dornford; and Frank is with him."

"He must introduce Frank to me," said Mr. Walton: "besides, I have something particular to say to him. How did you tell me your mamma was to-day?"

"Very weak and poorly," replied Amy; "but she seemed better when I left her."

"Ah!" said Mr. Walton, half muttering to himself; "I doubt if it will be right; it may only excite a false hope: there will be no harm in delay."

"What?" exclaimed Amy, who just caught the last words; "delay, did you say?—what delay?"

"Nothing, nothing," answered Mr. Walton, hastily. "I wish your uncle would not make me delay here: he does not generally speak to any one when he leaves the church, but to-day he is having quite a conversation."

Amy looked earnestly at Mr. Walton, with the conviction that this was only said to distract her attention; and an indefinable feeling of mingled dread and curiosity took possession of her mind. But there was nothing to satisfy her: the expression of Mr. Walton's countenance was cheerful as usual; and Amy, though very quick in perception, was not quite old enough to perceive a trace of thoughtfulness beneath it. She did notice, however, the quick, impatient glances which he cast towards the church-yard gate, and the restlessness of his manner as he paced up and down the little walk leading to it, venting his uneasiness by kicking away the leaves and broken sticks lying in his path. In another person it would not have been remarkable; but she was so accustomed to see Mr. Walton perfectly composed, that in an instant it awakened her attention. The parting words were at last said; Mr. Dornford walked away; and Amy hoped that in a few minutes her curiosity might be set at rest. But she was disappointed. Mr. Walton eagerly seized her uncle's arm, and drew him aside; a short conversation ensued; and then Mr. Harrington called out that they had better not wait for him, but walk home alone, and he would follow. Amy really felt uneasy, and yet she could hardly tell why, but her mamma's constant anxiety had in some degree infected her;

and any thing like mystery immediately made her think of Colonel Herbert. Miss Morton listened to her fears with interest, and did her utmost to calm her mind, telling her that, in all probability, Mr. Walton's business was something connected with his parish, and that it was unlikely, almost impossible, he could have heard any thing from India : but she advised her not to mention her notions to her mamma till after her uncle's return, as it would only make her needlessly uncomfortable ; and if there were any thing to be told, she would not be kept long in suspense. Amy hearkened, and tried to believe ; and had been so used to depend upon the opinions of others, as to be almost persuaded she had been fanciful without reason, whilst she readily promised to say nothing of her anxiety : but she could not recover her usual happy spirits ; and when they reached Emmerton, instead of going immediately to Mrs. Herbert's room, she petitioned Miss Morton to walk once more with her to the lodge gate, that they might see when her uncle arrived. He waited, however, so long, that Amy herself grew weary of watching, and was the first to propose returning to the house.

" You will be tired," she said to Miss Morton, " and then we shall not be able to go and see Mrs. Walton this afternoon. You know, you promised you would, if you could manage it, because you did not like to wait behind after church ; and I should be so sorry to miss it, for we always used to dine with her on Christmas Day ; and she will be so vexed if she does not see either mamma or me."

Miss Morton acknowledged herself cold, though not tired ; and, at any rate, it was useless to stand longer at the gate, for, after all, there might be nothing to hear : and Amy repeated for the twentieth time, that she did not really think there was

any thing, though, at the same instant, she ran a few steps down the road, just to look once more round the corner.

Mrs. Herbert was dressed, and more comfortable, and had many questions to ask, as to whether Amy had had a pleasant walk, whether she had spoken to Mr. Walton, and whether Mrs. Walton found her rheumatism worse than usual ; and Amy, seated by the window, endeavoured to answer them all, with her mind wandering to other things, when the sudden appearance of Mr. Walton and her uncle, on the terrace below, made her stop short, and exclaim, " There they are, both of them. I think there must be something."

The next moment brought her to recollection ; but there was no retracting what had been said, — she was obliged to explain ; and the change in her mother's countenance, and the subdued tremulousness of her voice, soon gave her reason to repent her incautiousness.

" This will not do," said Mrs. Herbert, endeavouring to command herself. " Amy, my love, tell your uncle I should wish to speak to him immediately."

The message was, however, unnecessary. Mr. Harrington had seen Amy at the window, and now, pausing in his walk, begged to know if he might be allowed to come up. " And Mr. Walton is with me," he added. " May he come too ?"

" Yes, directly," was Amy's reply. Her mamma was just wishing to see them both ; and in a few minutes their steps were heard along the gallery.

Mrs. Herbert turned very pale ; and Amy stood by her, kissing her forehead, and trying to soothe the agitation she had so inconsiderately excited.

" It is quite unnatural," said Mr. Walton, as he entered, " to pay you a visit on Christmas Day ; — a sad falling off from former times. I have been

thing in it beyond what Mr. Harrington has just told you. The circumstance is mentioned in the light careless way in which we all speak of things of no importance to ourselves, but which may, perhaps, affect even the lives of our fellow-creatures. My friend Campbell had no notion how deeply it would interest me."

Mrs. Herbert seized the letter, and read the sentences again and again ; but, as Mr. Walton had stated, there was nothing further to be gained from them, though every word was examined and weighed : as yet, it was only report ; and with this Mrs. Herbert was obliged to be contented. " I see," she said, looking at her brother, who was evidently wishing, yet afraid to speak, " you are anxious lest I should build too much upon this ; but I hope I shall not. Whatever trial may be in store, it would be almost cruel to deprive me of a few weeks of hope."

" I am only afraid of the consequences of a disappointment," replied Mr. Harrington : " but I cannot give sermons to any one, especially to you, so I shall leave you with Mr. Walton ; his advice will be much more efficacious than mine."

" Here is a better sermon than any words !" said Mr. Walton, as he patted Amy's head, when her uncle was gone. " For your child's sake, you will not, I am sure, allow either hope or fear to have too powerful an effect upon you. I do not think either of you are well fitted to bear any great excitement."

Amy's countenance certainly showed that Mr. Walton's words were true : every tinge of colour had faded from her cheek, and her bright dark eyes were dimmed with tears, which she was using her utmost efforts to repress. She had been silent, for she felt too much for words : her hope was far more

certain than her mother's, since it had not been so often chilled by disappointment; and the dreams of happiness which filled her mind were for the present without a cloud.

"Yes," said Mrs. Herbert, in reply to Mr. Walton's observation, "Amy is indeed a motive for every exertion: it would be a hard thing to cause her anxiety for both her parents."

Amy tried to speak; and hardly understanding her own feelings, was almost ashamed to find that her tears were more ready than her smiles at this moment of happiness. "Dear, dear mamma," she exclaimed, "we shall never be anxious now. And you think he will be here soon?"

"We *hope* every thing that is delightful," said Mr. Walton, "but we do not *think certainly* about any thing; so, my dear child, you must be contented as yet to go on just as you have done for the last twelvemonths: and you must let me talk a little to your mamma alone; I am sure she will never be able to reason calmly while that little earnest face of yours is before her."

Amy felt slightly inclined to rebel, as it seemed almost wrong that she should be sent away from her mother at such a time: but she had never been accustomed to dispute Mr. Walton's wishes; and left the room to make Miss Morton and Dora acquainted with the intelligence her mother had received.

Miss Morton's room was the first place she sought; and the next quarter of an hour was spent in telling her of all that was to be done when Colonel Herbert returned—how they were to talk, and ride, and walk, and the alterations that were to be made at the cottage, and the places he was to take her to see: and Emily, though feeling that the foundation of all this happiness was insecure, could not make up

her mind to check such simple innocent hopes. The same things were again repeated to Dora in the school-room ; and Margaret would have had her share also, but the indifferent tone in which she said, " Dear me ! how strange ! " when informed of the tidings from India, quite chilled Amy's flow of spirits ; and she hastened away to find a more sympathising listener. Dora's interest in her cousin, and all that concerned her, had lately so much increased, that it was no effort to her to listen as long as Amy felt inclined to talk ; and she was sorry when Miss Morton appeared, to remind her of the intended walk to the rectory, and to ask whether she still wished to go.

" Oh ! yes," said Amy, " if mamma does not care about my leaving her. I do so long to see Mrs. Walton now more than ever ; but I will just go to mamma's room and ask her."

Mrs. Herbert's conversation with Mr. Walton had been long and engrossing ; and this, added to the previous excitement, had so fatigued her, that she was looking much worse than in the morning ; and Amy resolved at first not to mention the walk, and took up a book as if not wishing to go out. But Mrs. Herbert never forgot the pleasures of others, and would not for an instant allow her to think of remaining at home, declaring that rest and solitude would be better than any society, and that it would be a much greater pleasure to hear an account of the visit on their return than to keep her by her side during the whole afternoon. Amy was only half satisfied ; but it was in vain to say that it was only the thought of the morning, and she was very much pleased with her book, and should be quite happy in reading it : Mrs. Herbert insisted, and she went.

Mrs. Walton's disposition was more sanguine than

her husband's : she had seen less of the world, and had heard and known less of its disappointments ; and her fondness for Mrs. Herbert made her seize upon every prospect of comfort for her, so eagerly, that there was no fear of Amy's hopes being again damped by any warning ; and, perhaps, that hour's visit was as full of delight to her as it was to the happy child, who, seated at her feet, looked up with a face so innocent and gay, that it seemed impossible to dread lest any evil should be near to mar her enjoyment. There was also a charm to Mrs. Walton in watching Miss Morton's interest in her little companion : she had a quick perception of character, and was peculiarly sensible of any thing like selfishness of feeling ; and she had often observed, that when persons have suffered much themselves they seem unable to enter into the pleasures of others. But affliction had produced a very different effect upon Emily Morton ; and now, though she had lost both her parents, had been obliged to leave her home, and had no prospect for the future but one of painful dependance, she still smiled as cheerfully, and spoke as hopefully to Amy, as if no thought of the difference in their situations had ever crossed her mind.

" You must take care of your dear mamma," were Mrs. Walton's parting words. " Colonel Herbert will look very blank if he returns to see the pale cheek she has now : for his sake tell her she must endeavour to get strong."

Amy promised to be very watchful, and had no doubt that every thing would be right : but Mrs. Walton was not so well satisfied ; and drew Miss Morton aside, to ask more particularly how Mrs. Herbert had borne the intelligence. Miss Morton could give her little information, but undertook to send a note to the rectory in the evening to ease

her mind ; though at the time the request was made Mrs. Walton acknowledged that it was apparently absurd to be so anxious.

"You would not wonder at it, however," she said, "if you knew all that Mrs. Herbert has been to me for many years ; even during the lifetime of my own child she was almost equally dear to me, and since that great loss, I have felt as if she were left to be my especial treasure. I need not say to *you* that she is deserving of all, and more than all, the affection I can give."

"And her child is exactly similar to her," replied Miss Morton.

"Yes," said Mrs. Walton ; "how could the child of such parents be different ? There is but one thing in which she does not resemble her mother : her disposition is naturally more lively and hopeful. It would require, probably, very much affliction to destroy the buoyancy of her spirits ; and I would willingly pray that many years may pass before she is so tried, unless it should be required for her good, for it would be a bitter thing to lose the sound of her merry laugh, and the brightness of her smile."

"It would make Emmerton very different to me," said Miss Morton. "As I have often told you, I could hardly have supposed before, how much interest and pleasure may be added to life by one so young ; — a mere child, as she really is, and yet with thoughtfulness and consideration which make me fancy her much older. My most earnest wish is, that Rose may one day be like her."

Amy's approach interrupted the conversation ; and Mrs. Walton parted from Emily Morton with a warmer feeling of affection, from the entire correspondence of their feelings towards her.

The happiness of Amy's mind was a peculiar

blessing at Emmerton on that day. It was Christmas Day; and every one knew that it was a time for especial enjoyment, though, perhaps, few of the party could have satisfactorily explained the reason why, and fewer still could have entered into the joy which none but a Christian can feel on the celebration of the Birth of their Redeemer. It was a duty to be cheerful, and yet almost every one had a secret grief which prevented them from being so. Mr. and Mrs. Harrington could not forget all that had passed within the last twelvemonth; and Dora and Frank sighed many times as they missed their favourite companion;—even Margaret, though she had suffered much less than the others when Edward died, could not be insensible to the change in the family, and wandered about the house complaining that it was not at all what Christmas Day used to be: but Amy had no such recollections to sadden her; and soon enlivened her cousins by the influence of her own gaiety, notwithstanding the shade which was occasionally cast over it, when Dora reminded her that by that time on the following day she would probably be occupied in trying to understand Mr. Cunningham's unintelligible language.

CHAP. XIV.

SATURDAY came, and with it the expected guests; and at a very awkward hour, just about twelve o'clock, when there was a long afternoon before them, with nothing to be done. Amy had made up her mind that they could not possibly arrive before four or five. It was some distance from Rochford Park to Emmerton; and she was sure there must be a great deal to do before they set off, and, in consequence, she had calculated upon seeing very little of either Mr. or Miss Cunningham on that day: her dismay, therefore, was extreme as she watched from the gallery-window, and saw the carriage slowly driving down the avenue. She was not, however, required to entertain them, for it was her duty to attend upon her mamma; and in the afternoon there was an engagement to walk with Miss Morton and Rose to Stephen's cottage, to inquire how he was getting on after his attack of gout, and carry him a new flannel-waistcoat, which Rose had taken great delight in helping to make. There was, therefore, no fear, she thought, of seeing much of Miss Cunningham, except at dinner-time; and as for her brother, he would probably not come in the way at all. And having thus relieved her mind, Amy returned to her mamma's room, delighting more than ever in its quietness and privacy.

Mrs. Herbert was still very unwell; she had passed a sleepless, anxious night, at one moment anticipating Colonel Herbert's return with the utmost

confidence, and the next picturing to herself all the bitterness of disappointment : but she made many efforts against this distrust, and tried to feel, what she knew to be true, that whatever might happen, it would be for her good, and that she should be supported under it.

Miss Cunningham appeared in the school-room in all the splendour of her new winter dress, made after the last Parisian fashion, and, for the first time, regretted that Amy was not present to be overpowered by such magnificence. Dora was the only person there ; and it was useless attempting to make an impression upon her : she had no eyes for any thing belonging to Miss Cunningham ; and her arrival at such an early hour was so unexpected and disagreeable, that it required some effort to be civil to her. " We did not expect you till dinner-time," she said, after the first greeting was over, in a tone which plainly meant, " and we did not want you."

" Oh ! " replied Miss Cunningham, " papa had some business in the neighbourhood, and so he insisted upon our setting off at eleven ; and a great bore it was. I am sure Warren must have spoilt half my dresses by packing them in such a hurry. My new-worked muslin, I suspect, will be quite unwearable, and the French grey silk not much better ; and as for the white silk, and the pink crape, and my morning dresses, I am quite unhappy about them. The only two which I feel at all sure of are the figured lilac satin, and the pale green poplin ; those I saw her put in myself."

The tone of pretended indifference in which this was spoken irritated Dora almost beyond endurance ; perhaps the more so, because she was sensible of having been at times guilty of the same folly. " I have no doubt the dresses will do very

well," she answered. "A lady's maid always understands how to pack; and if they should be injured, it will not signify, as far as the appearance goes, for there is no one coming here who will take the smallest notice of what you have on."

Miss Cunningham looked and felt extremely mortified, and evidently showed it by the tone in which she said, "I thought you were going to have a large party, and a dance, and all sorts of things."

"What a strange idea!" exclaimed Dora. "What should we have a dance for?"

"I thought every body had dances when they asked their friends at Christmas," said Miss Cunningham; "that is to say, we have been accustomed to it when we have visited people of our own rank in the county; but I suppose it is not the custom amongst common people."

"Perhaps not," replied Dora. "Of course, we can tell nothing about them: but whether it is the custom or not, it would make no difference to us. Papa and mamma generally do as they choose, without caring about the rest of the world."

"And will there be nobody, then?" asked Miss Cunningham, with a sudden pang, as she thought of the green poplin, and the white silk, and the pink crape, wasting their splendour upon Mr. and Mrs. Harrington.

"Just a few people," was the reply; "the young Dornfords, and their papa, and one or two others."

"What, boys! schoolboys!" exclaimed Miss Cunningham, in horror: and before Dora could answer, Margaret came into the room, in particularly good spirits, and with a manner which formed a singular contrast to her sister's. The embraces were so fervent, the expressions of affection so warm, that a common observer might have supposed with reason that this was the first meeting, after an absence of

several years, between very dear friends; while Dora looked on with a curling lip, and a contracted brow, and a secret rejoicing that she was not in Margaret's place.

"When you have done kissing, Margaret," she said, at length, "perhaps you will just listen to me. Amy wishes to dine to-day at half-past one; and mamma has no objection, and so it is to be."

"Really, Dora," replied Margaret, "it is very rude to attend to Amy's wishes instead of Lucy's. I always thought relations were to be thought of last."

"Amy wishes to dine at half-past one; and mamma has no objection, and so it is to be," repeated Dora, with a manner which she intended to be dignified, though it was only very cross.

"Don't mind her," half whispered Margaret to Miss Cunningham, "it is only her foolish way; we need not dine earlier than we choose for Amy: it really is too absurd to think of giving up to her; and I shall speak to mamma about it."

Dora pretended not to hear this speech, and left the room satisfied with having exhibited her authority, and carelessness of Miss Cunningham's feelings, and dissatisfied, in her secret heart, by the consciousness of having been extremely unamiable. She met Amy on the stairs; and the sight of her gay innocent face, which seemed quite a reproach, had seldom been so unwelcome: but it was impossible to vent any anger upon her; and hastily passing, Dora shut herself up in her own room; while Amy, who had lately been quite unused to such a manner from her cousin, could only wonder in silence what had happened to discompose her.

Miss Cunningham, in the mean time, relieved from Dora's presence, felt no scruple in giving way to her expressions of dislike to Amy; and, with great earnestness, endeavoured to inspire Margaret

with similar feelings. It was so strange, so unusual—such a very great liberty, for a cousin to think of choosing what time every one else should dine ; really, she could not have imagined that Mrs. Harrington would allow it : but she had always observed that Amy Herbert was very much at her ease ; in a little time she would have every thing her own way. “Of course I don’t mean to speak against her,” she continued ; “only I know a family just like yours, Margaret, where there was a cousin brought up, and at last her uncle and aunt really became fonder of her than they were of their own children.”

“There is no fear of that with mamma,” replied Margaret ; “I am sure she does not care a straw for Amy. Papa is different. I do think, sometimes, he takes a good deal of notice of her : but then, you know, she is not brought up with us ; she is only here on a visit.”

“That does not make any difference ; I am quite sure, if you do not take care, she will stand in your way in every thing. Papa said, the other day, that he thought Mrs. Harrington would have consented to our going to London, only she remembered your cousin ; and then she declared, as she should feel obliged to take her, the plan would not do.”

Margaret’s vexation was very great, yet she could not entirely enter into her companion’s antipathy : she had felt too much the charm of Amy’s sweet temper and obliging disposition to be able cordially to abuse her. But Miss Cunningham loved the sound of her own voice too well to require an answer ; and the expression of her own likings and dislikings was all that was important to her. “George provokes me so,” she said ; “he does nothing, now, but lecture me from morning till night, and wish I was like her : really, I think he might find some one my own equal in rank for me to imitate, if

he is so dissatisfied. I told him, as we were coming here, that if he said anything about her being with us in London, I would not go till next year: and I may have quite my own way about it; so I have put a stop to that."

Margaret was annoyed, though she did not like to appear so. Miss Cunningham's superior age and rank kept her always considerably in awe; but she was painfully struck by the want of ladylike feeling, which had induced her friend to speak in such terms of so near a relation.

Miss Cunningham, however, could never discover when she had said or done anything amiss. From her childhood her perception on such subjects had been singularly obtuse; and nothing in her education had served to quicken her knowledge of character: she went on, therefore, in the same tone, with the full impression that all her observations must be agreeable. "Dora tells me that there is no one invited here but a parcel of school boys and girls: and really, I must say, it was hardly worth while to come six miles this cold weather merely for them: of course I thought there was to be a dance."

Margaret endeavoured to explain her sister's statement. There were to be some boys, certainly, as companions for Frank; but there were to be other people besides: and indeed her mamma had sent out some more notes only this morning, because Dora said that she would rather have a great many to entertain than a few.

"Then there will be a dance," said Miss Cunningham. "How are you to amuse yourselves else?"

"It would be very nice," replied Margaret; "but I don't quite think papa and mamma have any notion of it. You know Christmas is not now what it was last year, when Edward was alive."

"Oh! yes, to be sure; I know all that: of course,

you were all very miserable, and cried a great deal at the time. I remember I was dreadfully wretched when my little brother William died. Indeed, mamma said she never knew any one with such strong feelings in her life. But, then, it is all past now ; and it is right to be cheerful, and try and forget it."

"I wish you would ask mamma," said Margaret. "She would listen to you, at any rate ; and she could not be angry at any proposal from you. It certainly would be a good way of amusing them."

"I don't mind, in the least, asking," answered Miss Cunningham. "I never did mind it, from a child. Mamma says it surprises her to see how little of the stupid shyness I have, which makes other girls so disagreeable. Let me see, — I shall wear my white silk, I think : there is a blonde fall to go with it, which makes it look beautiful. That or the pink crape. Pink suits my complexion best ; but then it is not quite so dressy. There is a picture of some great lady in the saloon at Rochford, which papa says is just like me in my pink crape. Mary Queen of Scots, I think it is, or Queen Elizabeth, — I don't know which ; only it is a queen of some kind. What shall you wear ?"

"Oh !" said Margaret, sadly, "you know we are not yet out of mourning, so we can have nothing but white ; only I wish mamma would give us new dresses."

"Of course she will. You can't possibly have a dance without a new dress : nobody ever heard of such a thing. My white silk is quite new ; and the pink crape I only put on one evening for papa to see. We shall dance, I suppose, in the hall." And how many persons do you think there will be ?"

Margaret had some difficulty in following the swiftness of her companion's imagination. It was

very delightful to picture the hall, brilliantly lighted up and filled with company, and herself exciting every one's admiration by the side of her plain friend. But then came another idea, not quite so agreeable, — Mrs. Harrington's stern features and look of surprise, when the plan should be first proposed. Margaret trembled as she thought of it; and, but for Miss Cunningham's unshrinking courage, the wish for the ball would soon have passed away. When a fancy, however, takes possession of a weak, selfish mind, there is but little room left for any other consideration. Miss Cunningham's mind was of this description: it was seldom capable of retaining more than one idea at a time, and whatever that might be, it was all engrossing. A little while ago, the journey to London had occupied every thought: now, her only wish was, that a dance should be given at Emmerton; and she was so firmly resolved that it must take place, that every obstacle, every notion of propriety, sank into nothing.

Margaret listened, and wondered, and wished, and at last ended in agreeing that a dance was quite necessary for their happiness, and for the happiness of each of the other members of the family, Mrs. Harrington included; and that the only way to manage it was for Miss Cunningham to talk to her mamma about it that very day.

The first thing that startled Margaret from her new dream of enjoyment was Dora's look of astonishment when informed at dinner of their intentions. "Do you really mean," she said, turning to Miss Cunningham, "that you are going to tell mamma we ought to have a dance this Christmas?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I half thought of talking to papa about it first; but he might make some

objection; and George might say no: so it is best to go at once to Mrs. Harrington."

"And do you recommend Miss Cunningham to do it?" asked Dora, looking at her sister.

"Yes, why should I not?" said Margaret, half frightened. "Do you think mamma will be angry?"

"Try, that is all," replied Dora.

"Perhaps," said Miss Morton, "Miss Cunningham is not quite aware of the painful circumstances which might make Mrs. Harrington unwilling, at this time, to give so large a party."

Miss Cunningham looked, in answer, astonished at hearing such an observation from Emily Morton in her presence. She did not, however, think the remark worthy of reply in words, and continued her account of what she thought ought to be done, and then again repeated her intentions with regard to her dress; ending by saying to Amy, "I suppose you have a white muslin; that will be well enough, as you are such a child."

Dora's amazement at Miss Cunningham's boldness was so great, that she made no attempt to prevent her following her own inclinations; besides, she rather enjoyed the thought of her being put down by Mrs. Harrington, and therefore ate her dinner in dignified silence; whilst Amy, whose astonishment was not less than her cousin's, felt she had no right to interfere, though she did hope something would be said to induce Miss Cunningham to refrain from taking so great a liberty.

But, perhaps, Margaret was the person who felt most uncomfortable. At first, the notion of a dance had been so agreeable that every objection was overlooked; but Dora's manner had recalled her to herself, and she began heartily to wish that the thing had never been mentioned; for if her mamma were spoken to, her name was sure to be brought for-

ward : and when dinner was over, she endeavoured most anxiously to inspire her friend with a little awe, by hinting at her own fears, and Mrs. Harrington's particularities. But she hinted in vain. Nothing but the plainest meaning in the plainest language could ever be understood by Miss Cunningham : and Margaret was at last obliged to beg that she would speak to her papa, and get the plan suggested by him.

Dora was in the room whilst this was passing, and still secretly desired that the original intention might be persisted in : and at first there appeared every probability of it ; for Miss Cunningham stared, pouted, and seemed quite puzzled at the idea that any thing she could say could be taken amiss : however, if Margaret were really silly enough to be afraid about such a trifle, she would do as she wished, but merely to please her : she only rejoiced that she was not kept in such leading-strings herself.

"It would be a good thing if you were," muttered Dora, as she sat by the window, looking with a careless eye upon the quiet wintry beauty of the garden.

It would have appeared lovely and peaceful, had the tone of her mind been the same ; but the contrast was too great to please her. The bright sky brought no cheerfulness to a heart discontented with itself ; it only caused a sigh for the vanished pleasures of the summer ; and the white frost, which still hung on the evergreens, called forth nothing but an exclamation against the miserable cold weather, and the desolation, wretchedness, and dulness of every thing and every body in the month of December. Amy was gone for her walk with Miss Morton ; Frank had set out for a ramble with his papa : they were stupid and disagreeable, and to be par-

doned for leaving her behind, after she had refused the entreaties of both to go with them, only when they were compared with Margaret, and Miss Cunningham, who was at that moment more unendurable than ever. She really could not remain any longer listening to her never-ending chattering ; and in the most desperate fit of ill-humour, with which she had been afflicted for weeks, Dora put on her bonnet and cloak, and sallied forth for a solitary walk. In which direction to go, she was undecided : the shrubbery was dull, the hill was cold, the park not fit for a winter's walk, and the terrace far too near the house to be agreeable ; and, as a last resource, she determined on finding her way to Stephen's cottage, in the hope of meeting Amy, though she had never before taken the trouble to visit it.

The path led along the side of the hill, which was covered by the Emmerton plantations, and then emerged into some open fields, through one of which flowed the deep rapid stream which, at Emmerton, almost expanded into a lake. A wooden bridge across the water, and a narrow lane, then led to Stephen's cottage, which stood alone in its small neat garden, showing, even in winter, symptoms of the care and taste bestowed upon it. The beauty of the walk was, however, wholly lost upon Dora ; she only felt that it was very cold, and would have returned home could any thing have been found within doors at all more alluring than the severity of the weather without. The sound of approaching voices first roused her from her discontented reverie ; and, as she looked hastily round, she perceived her papa and Frank coming down the hill.

Mr. Harrington expressed surprise at finding her alone so far from the house, and objected to her proceeding further, laying some blame on Miss

Morton for not having accompanied her. Dora's ill-humour did not interfere with her usual quick sense of justice; and lately she had become peculiarly sensible to the habit which prevailed at Emmerton, of making Miss Morton bear the burden of other people's faults: perhaps, too, some compunction for having occasionally been guilty of the same offence, though not in an equal degree, made her now very desirous of explaining the truth. Mr. Harrington was easily satisfied: he had rather an interest in Miss Morton; she was so quiet and unobtrusive, and lady-like, and never troubled him with complaints: but he insisted upon Frank's accompanying his sister, if she still wished to go farther; and though Dora declared there was no doubt of meeting Miss Morton in a few minutes, he would not hear of her being left alone: and Frank, much against his inclination, was obliged to remain.

CHAP. XV.

"We had better go at once to the cottage, Frank," said Dora, when her father was gone; "we shall be sure to find them there; and I dare say they have been kept longer than they intended, talking to old Stephen."

"And who is Stephen?" said Frank.

"Oh, I am sure I don't know," replied Dora; "only an old sort of servant of grandpapa's, who always has the gout. He was steward, I believe, once: I never troubled my head much about him; but Amy talks a good deal of him."

"And what makes you go and see him, then?" said Frank.

"Nothing at all, but because I wanted something to do, and Amy and Miss Morton were gone, and I could not bear staying at home with Miss Cunningham."

"How you sigh! Dora," said Frank; "and how grave you look. I don't think you have laughed heartily once since I came home."

"There is nothing to make one laugh that I can see," said Dora, "in this gloomy old place, and the dull cold weather."

"We were never dull at Wayland," replied Frank; "and the weather was much worse there last winter than it is now."

"Well I don't know what it is," said Dora; "but every body is grown so cross here, there is no bearing it; and it is not at all like Christmas-time."

"Wait till Monday," answered Frank; "we shall

be merry enough then : the young Dornfords are coming here quite early, that we may have some skating on the lake."

"Young Dornfords, indeed!" exclaimed Dora : "what good will that be to me? I shall not skate."

"But you used to like watching us," said Frank, in a disappointed tone.

"Times are changed," answered Dora, shortly ; "I shall not like it now."

Frank turned away from his sister, and walked some paces off, thinking all the time how disagreeable she was, and how much pleasanter the walk home with his papa would have been. His own disposition was so happy, that he could neither understand nor endure one which was the reverse, and Dora's age and character made him always feel rather in awe ; so that he could not tell her, what he saw was the fact, that the fault of every thing lay in herself and her own discontent. Silently and sulkily Dora walked on to the cottage : as they passed the window, she had a full view of what was going on within ; and as she looked, her feeling of dissatisfaction increased. The room was small but extremely neat, and ornamented with a few prints and pictures, and some wooden shelves, on which were ranged all Stephen's most valuable treasures—a large Bible, in two volumes, which had descended to him from his grandfather, the whole Duty of Man, given him by Mrs. Herbert's mother, and several other books of a similar kind, all presents from different members of the family ; some curious old cups and saucers, presents likewise, a wooden knife made from the horn of the first buck which he had seen killed, the handle of the first whip he had used when he became coachman at Emmerton, and, above all, the leading rein with which he had taught all the young gentlemen and ladies to ride. There was a story

attached to each of these relics ; and Amy, though she had heard them a hundred times, still listened with pleasure as they were repeated again and again : and when Dora looked, she saw her seated on a low stool by Stephen's side, with her hand resting on his knee, while he was explaining to Miss Morton how nearly Mr. Harrington had met with a serious accident when he first mounted his Shetland pony. There was poverty in the cottage (or what at least seemed such to Dora,) and sickness, and pain, for Stephen had been very ill, and was even then suffering considerably ; and yet she could not look upon it without something like a feeling of envy. Stephen was resigned to his illness, and grateful for its alleviation. Amy had forgotten herself entirely, and was watching with delight the interest Emily Morton took in hearing her old friend talk ; and Emily was thinking of the many blessings which God has granted to soften the trials of life, and was learning a lesson of cheerful resignation, which none but herself would have imagined she required. Dora was young, and she had never been taught to think ; but there was something in the general appearance of the cottage, and in the expression of the old man's countenance, which spoke more forcibly than any words. She had youth, health, and riches ; he had age, sickness, and poverty : how was it that he could smile while she sighed, that he could be grateful when she was discontented ? She did not put the question into words, but the feeling was so painful that she could not wait to think about it, and hastily knocking at the door, hardly waited for an answer before she entered. Amy uttered an exclamation of surprise and pleasure ; and Stephen half rose from his seat to do honour to his unexpected visitor.

"I hardly thought ever to have seen you here, Miss Harrington," he said, trying to be cordial, and

yet not able entirely to conceal his sense of the neglect which he had experienced. "'Tis so long since the master came back to the Hall, and none of you young ladies have found your way here before, that I began to think it wasn't the fashion now to go about as it used to be."

"Oh, I don't know," replied Dora, who would willingly have been indifferent to the reproof which she felt was implied; "your cottage is so far off, Stephen, and the days are getting so short."

"So they are, so they are," answered Stephen: "'tis all very true, Miss Harrington; but somehow, in the old times, people didn't think about far off, and short days;—not that I mean to complain; for you know the Bible tells us we are not to ask 'why the former days were better than these.'"

"Here is my brother come to see you, too," said Dora, turning to the door to look for Frank, who had lingered on the outside. "You cannot find fault with him, for he only arrived on Thursday."

"Master Frank!" exclaimed the old man, while his clear grey eyes were lighted up with an unusual expression of pleasure; "but you don't mean he's here, only coming."

"No, not coming," said Amy; "really here; I saw him just now."

Stephen tried to move from his chair in his impatience to ascertain if her words were true; but he was not able to walk without assistance, and sank back again, with a half-uttered expression of regret, which made him the next instant murmur to himself, "'Tis God's will; and 'tis fit we should learn to bear it."

"Here he is, really!" exclaimed Amy, as Dora re-entered the cottage, followed by Frank. "I am sure, Stephen, you did not quite believe us."

Stephen only answered by taking Frank's hand in

his, while, for a few moments, he fixed a deep, earnest gaze upon every feature of his countenance.

"Yes, it's like, very like," at length he said, in a low voice, as if speaking to himself; "like his mother, like all her family; but I could have loved it better if it had been different."

"Oh, Stephen! exclaimed Amy, who had caught the words, notwithstanding the tone in which they were spoken, "if you say so, Frank will think you are not glad to see him."

"No," replied Stephen, "there was never one of the name of Harrington that could think that yet, Miss Amy. The young gentleman will learn soon enough that it does my very heart good to look at him; but 'tis natural for an old man to think most of them that are gone: and, somehow, 'twas a foolish fancy, but I thought that may-be he might have his father's face too; but he hasn't, not half so much as the young lady there; and she must be like Master Edward, for the people at the Hall tell me he was the very image of the master."

Dora had moved to the window on the first allusion to her brother, but, struck with Stephen's manner she now came forward, and said, "Do you remember what any of us were like, Stephen, when we left Emmerton?"

"Remember!" repeated the old man. "Who wouldn't remember those who were as his own children? Ah, Miss Harrington, 'twas a sad day when the master told me he was going; but 'twould have been still more sad if I had known that there was one who was never to return."

Dora tried to restrain the tears which glistened in her eyes; and again she would have turned away, but Stephen prevented her. "And did you love him, then, so much," he said, earnestly, forgetting, at the sight of her distress, the neglect and indifference

which he had so much felt. "Ah, 'twas right and natural, for he was the flower of all; and bitter it must have been to lose him, for 'twas your first sorrow: but if God should spare you to live as many years as I have done, Miss Harrington, you will learn, when you lay your treasures in the cold earth, to thank God for taking them out of a sinful world."

"It is hard for Miss Harrington to think so now, Stephen," said Miss Morton, fearing lest his words and manner might increase Dora's grief. "At her age there is so much to hope for, that it is impossible to expect it."

"And I don't expect it," said Stephen; "I only tell her so now, that she may think of my words when I am gone: and I know that they are true, for I have felt it. I had four once, and I loved them all as my own life. The master himself and the family were not nearer to me, nor so near as they were; and when the first of them was carried to his grave, I thought that my heart would have broke: but God gave me to think better afterwards, for he sent me many a hard trial; and so, when my spirit was turned in a manner from the earth, he called for all the rest, one after another; and I watched them till the hour of their death, and heard that their trust was in Him; and then I laid them to their rest, and blessed Him for His mercy, for I knew that sickness and sorrow might knock at my door, but they could never knock at theirs."

There was a moment's pause after the old steward had spoken, for none but Miss Morton entirely understood his meaning: even Amy, though she had often heard him talk in the same way before, thought it strange; and she stood looking in his face, and wondering whether it could be possible for herself or her cousins ever to feel like him. Stephen

smiled as he watched the expression of her countenance. "You don't half believe me, Miss Amy," he said, "any more than I believed you when you said the young gentleman was come to see me: and perhaps 'tis as well you don't; only 'tis fit for us all to think betimes that we are not to stay here for ever, and to expect to find things hard as we grow old; for so we learn to look above, and then it may be God may see good to spare us a long trial, and call us early to Himself."

"To die!" exclaimed Amy, in a half-frightened tone.

"It sounds hard," said Stephen; "and yet, God only knows how great a blessing it may be. But you need not look so sad, Miss Amy, the time may be very far off; and when it comes you may have learnt to think like me: and there may be many a happy day in store for you all, only it may be near too, — aye, near even to that little one there, who looks as if she had never known what sickness was."

Amy looked at Rose; and certainly it did seem more difficult than ever to believe the truth of Stephen's words. She had left the rest of the party, not caring for what was passing, and was standing by the door, amusing herself with the antics of a young kitten, as it tried to catch the piece of cork which she held just out of its reach. Her bonnet had fallen back, and her bright chesnut hair hung in clustering ringlets about her neck; the glow of health and happiness was on her cheek, and her dark eyes sparkled with delight, and her little hands were clapped in ecstasy at every fresh movement of the kitten; and as Stephen spoke, she burst into a merry laugh, when the tiny animal, showing unusual agility, seized upon the cork, and to her great surprise carried it off in triumph.

"You will make us all melancholy, Stephen," said

Miss Morton, as she watched the thoughtful expression of Dora's face. "My little pet has never known an hour's real illness from the day of her birth, so we will not begin fearing for her now."

"No, not fear," replied Stephen; "only," he added, in a lower tone, "'tis an angel's face; and at times I have thought that it was fitter for heaven than for earth. But I didn't mean," he continued, aloud, "to talk about such grave things just the first day of the young gentleman's visit: it isn't my way, Master Frank, in general, and so you shall know if you will come and see me again; and please God I get strong upon my legs, I shall hope to show you a good many things I've got together down here. There's the goats, that are as tame as children, and the old hunter, that's been turned out to grass for these half-dozen years,—there isn't such another beauty in all the country round; and then there are the ponies that I had brought from the hills to train for the young ladies,—may-be you'd like to see them now; my grand-daughter will show you where they are."

Frank, who had felt strange and uncomfortable during the last quarter of an hour, gladly seized upon the idea, and the whole party immediately proceeded to inspect the ponies, followed by Stephen's lamentations that he could not exhibit them himself. Frank was just beginning to fancy he understood the merits and demerits of horses, and therefore examined them with a critical eye, and with every wish to show his knowledge by finding fault: but there was very little to be said against them; in colour and shape, they were almost perfect of their kind; and Frank's admiration, and Dora's earnest entreaties that they might be sent immediately to the Hall to be tried, soon recompensed Stephen for the disappointment he had at

first felt respecting them. "To be sure they are very well," was his reply to Amy's question, if he did not think them more beautiful than any he had ever seen before; "but they don't come up to the old ones, Miss Amy. There was the chestnut, that your own mamma used to ride when she was no bigger than you; *that* was worth looking at; not but what these are very well,—very well indeed, for those who never saw any better."

"Ah, Stephen, that is so tiresome of you," exclaimed Amy, half laughing and half vexed; "you always will bring up something or other to make one discontented: you never can think that any thing now is as good as it used to be."

"Well, so it is," said Stephen: "and when you come to my age, Miss Amy, you'll feel the same; not but what there is one thing which I like better now than all, and that's your own dear little merry face: 'tis always a comfort to look at it; and in the old times I didn't want comfort as I do now."

"And Dora, and Frank, and Margaret, will all come and see you now," said Amy; "and Miss Morton and Rose too. You will have so many visitors, Stephen, I am afraid you will get tired of them."

"They'll be welcome — all welcome, at all hours," answered Stephen; "any of the family: and if, please God, the Colonel should come back, as they say he will, why I think I shall begin my life over again, — t'will all seem so old and natural."

Amy's eyes brightened at the idea. "I want some one to tell me how long it will be before he can be here," she said, "that I may count the days: but they all say it is uncertain, and I must not think about it: but I do think about it all day long; and so does mamma, though she does not say much."

"'Twill be a blessed day," said Stephen, "when it does come; and, if it please God, I pray that I may live to see it. Sometimes I have thought I could die more happy if I could see young madam smile as she used to do."

"Well, Stephen," interrupted Frank, who was becoming impatient, "you will send the ponies up the first thing to-morrow, won't you? No, not to-morrow, though; to-morrow is Sunday; let them come up to night."

"Why, Frank," said Dora, "what good can that do? Monday morning will be quite early enough; you cannot possibly try them before."

"But 'tis his wish, Miss Harrington," said Stephen; "and 'tis the first thing he has asked of me: so if there's no offence to you, 'twould be a pleasure to me to have them up at the Hall to night; and one of the grooms can quite easily come to fetch them."

Frank's smile spoke his thanks; and Dora, pleased at any thing which made his holidays happier than she had feared they would be, took a most cordial leave of Stephen, and left his cottage in a much better mood than she had entered it.

"I think," she said to Amy, as they walked home, "that there must be something very pleasant in going to visit poor people when they are comfortably off, like Stephen; they must be so glad to see one; and there is nothing to make one melancholy: but I can't say I should like getting into those dirty holes which some people have such a fancy for."

"Oh! Dora," exclaimed Amy, "I can't think any one really likes dirty holes, as you call them; but you know if no one were to look after them there would be nothing done for the people who live in them."

"But why do they live there?" said Dora; "why don't they have neat cottages like Stephen's, and

look cheerful, and be grateful for what is given them? I have heard people say that it is all their own fault being so miserably off, and that there is no good in doing anything for them."

"Only," replied Amy, "a good many people have no work, and then of course they have nothing to live on."

"How do you know?" asked Dora; "do you ever go and see any of them but Stephen?"

"Oh dear, yes!" replied Amy, in a tone of surprise; "all the people in the village I know quite well: mamma always takes me with her to their cottages."

"And does aunt Herbert like going?" said Dora.

"Yes, very much, except when she is tired and ill: but she goes just the same; and they are so fond of her."

Dora looked thoughtful, and said that it must be a great deal of trouble.

"Sometimes it is," said Amy; "but mamma always seems better when she comes back."

"There is not any thing done for rich people when they are unhappy," said Dora; "no one thinks of trying to give them pleasure."

"Do you think that is quite the case?" asked Miss Morton. "I should have said that there was care and kindness shown to every one, every day of their lives."

"Not to me," said Dora, "excepting, of course, from papa and mamma."

"I fear," said Miss Morton, "we should be very badly off if our parents' care were all that we had to depend on."

"I know what you mean," replied Dora, thinking for a moment; "but then the blessings which God sends are so different from the trouble which people

say rich persons ought to take about the poor. Of course, He can do every thing."

"Yes," said Miss Morton; "and when we think of His infinite power, we can hardly imagine that His actions can be any example for us: but there was a time when He condescended to live upon the earth; and we do not find then that He shrunk from taking trouble, as we call it, to do good."

Dora was silent and uncomfortable; she was beginning to get a faint notion of the extent of her duties, and of the care and thought which she ought to bestow upon her fellow-creatures as well as herself; and she turned from the idea in something like despair, fearing that it would be quite useless to attempt fulfilling them.

Amy watched her, and saw that something was amiss; and leaving Miss Morton, she went to the other side, and put her hand within her cousin's without speaking.

The action was understood; and again Dora felt self-reproach as she noticed the gentle consideration of one so young, and thought of her own pride and selfishness. "I should like to go with you some day," she said, "when aunt Herbert takes you amongst the cottagers, just to know what you say to them, and how you behave."

"I never say any thing," replied Amy, "except, perhaps, just to ask them if they are better; but I like hearing mamma talk to them."

"But there can be nothing said that you can care about," observed Dora.

"Yes, indeed, there is, generally," answered Amy. "I like to hear about all their children; and I like to hear them tell mamma about their being ill and poor: I don't mean that I wish them to be ill and poor; but it is very nice to see how mamma com-

forts them ; and it gives me pleasure to hear her talk to Mr. Walton about them ; and when I go home, the cottage always seems so much larger, and more comfortable than it did before ; I never wish then that we had a larger house, and more servants."

"And do you ever wish so now?" asked Dora.

Amy blushed, but answered without hesitation : "I am afraid I do wish it very often ; but I know it is so wrong that it makes me very unhappy."

"Wrong!" exclaimed Dora ; "how can it be wrong ? Every one in the world wishes for something or another ; not that you would be one bit better off, Amy, if you were to live at Emmerton to-morrow ; at least I think you are much happier than I am."

"Mamma says the same," replied Amy, "and of course she knows best ; only it does not seem so : but I know it is wicked in me to indulge such feelings."

"That is so silly," said Dora : "how can it be wicked when every body has them ? Don't you think now, Emily, that every one wishes for something better than what they possess?"

"Yes," replied Miss Morton ; "but some persons wish for things that are right and good, and others for those which are wrong, and this makes all the difference."

"There can be no harm in houses and servants," said Dora.

"Only," said Miss Morton, "that they are apt to make us think proudly of ourselves, and despise those who are without them ; and that at our baptism we promised to renounce the pomps and vanities of the world."

"Then what would you have people think of and long for?" asked Dora.

Amy looked at her cousin with a slight feeling of surprise at the question ; but Miss Morton did not appear to consider it strange, for she answered immediately : " I think if persons were quite good as they ought to be, all their wishes would be for the blessings which are promised us in the Bible, and that they would care no more for earthly grandeur than a person who is passing through a foreign country does for what he may see there, when he has much better things at home."

" What ! " exclaimed Dora, " not think about having comfortable houses and pretty places, and plenty of money ! we might just as well all be poor at once."

" Perhaps," said Miss Morton, " you may remember a verse in the New Testament, which says, that the poor are blessed. It is very hard to believe, but if the Bible tells us so, it must be true."

" That is just what mamma would say," observed Amy ; " but I don't think I quite like to hear grown-up people talk so, because I am sure it is right to think it ; and yet it seems quite impossible, and as if it would make one always melancholy ; only you are not melancholy," she added, looking at Miss Morton.

" It would not be possible for any one at your age to feel like a grown-up person who has had a great many trials," replied Emily ; " but it is quite right for you to try at once to overcome your longing for grandeur and riches, because it is one of the lessons which we are sent into the world to learn, and one of the best ways of learning it, is by doing what Miss Harrington mentioned just now—going amongst poor people, I mean."

" I don't see what that has to do with it," said Dora.

" If the poor people we visit are happy," replied

Emily, "we shall see that God has given them pleasures quite independent of those we value so much, and we shall learn to think them of less importance; and if they are unhappy, we shall thank God for having placed us in a different situation; and whatever may be our trials, we shall bear them with far greater patience, when we see what the poor are forced to endure. A visit to a sick person, in want, will often do more to make us contented and grateful than all the sermons that ever were preached."

"Do you really think so?" said Dora, gravely: "I wonder whether it would make me happier."

"Will you try?" asked Miss Morton, eagerly, "will you, if Mrs. Harrington has no objection, go with me some day, and see the poor people? Mr. Walton has often said he wished you would."

"Oh, Dora! do go," exclaimed Amy: "I should be so delighted if you knew them all, as mamma and I do."

"I don't know," answered Dora: "mamma will object, I am sure."

"But just try," persisted Amy: "never mind if she does say no; there is no harm in asking."

"Ah! but mamma's 'no,' is different from aunt Herbert's," replied Dora: "it always means she is angry."

Amy felt this was true, and could not urge her cousin to do what she knew would be so alarming to herself; and Miss Morton's experience of Dora's disposition was sufficient to render her aware, that to urge any thing was the most certain method of making her determine upon not doing it. She, therefore, was silent, and the conversation dropped, for they had now nearly reached the hall; but it did not pass from Dora's mind: it had given her a

new idea of duty, and a hope of increased pleasure and interest, in a way which was not only innocent but good ; and before she again met Miss Morton she had determined upon making the request to her mamma, that she might be allowed to go into the village, even at the risk of encountering her awful frown, and very decided " No."

CHAP. XVI.

THE visit to Stephen's cottage had so engrossed Amy's mind, that she had for the time entirely forgotten Miss Cunningham and the dance, and even the dread of Mr. Cunningham's conversation; but when the evening came, and they were to appear in the drawing-room, she felt a considerable degree of trepidation, and dressed herself much more reluctantly than usual, lingering in her room, in her anxiety to delay the awful moment, till she found that her cousins had left her to go down stairs alone. Mrs. Herbert was tired, and proposed remaining by herself all the evening; and there was, therefore, no alternative for Amy, but to summon all her courage, and earnestly hope that no one would take any notice of her. This hope, however, was vain, for Mr. Cunningham perceived her instantly, and seemed as much determined as before to enter into conversation. Perhaps he might have had more compassion, had he known what was passing in Amy's mind, and how anxiously she longed to be seated by Dora, at the other end of the room; but he was so accustomed to be understood by his own family, that he was not aware of the pain he inflicted upon strangers, especially upon a shy, timid child, and his only wish was, to take notice of one, whom he fancied others, and especially his sister, were inclined to neglect. Amy stood by his side, blushing and trembling, and trying to understand, and feeling really grateful for his kindness in troubling himself about her, but, at the same time,

strongly inclined to laugh, as she watched his strange grimaces. Once, however, she caught Margaret's eye, and saw her sily attempting to imitate him, and in an instant she recovered herself, and making a greater effort to comprehend what he was saying, soon found it comparatively easy. After a few observations on indifferent subjects, Mr. Cunningham made some inquiries about Colonel Herbert, and Amy's heart was quite won, when he told her that he recollected him before he went to India, and that every one loved and esteemed him, and that he looked forward now with much pleasure to his return; and she then ventured to ask the question to which she had not been able hitherto to obtain an answer — how long it would be before her papa could arrive. Mr. Cunningham, with great good-nature, began calculating probabilities; and Amy was more than recompensed for her previous attention, when he said, that now the insurrection was over, there was no doubt Colonel Herbert would be able to leave India immediately, and that, probably, he would be with them almost as soon as a letter could reach them to announce his return; he might even be in England before they heard from him; and as he spoke, Amy turned to the door on the entrance of a servant, with a vague fancy that even then her father might be near. Her cousins observed, with surprise, the notice that was taken of her: Dora felt pleasure, and Margaret envy; for she recollected her conversation in the morning, and already began to imagine that Amy would be put before her in every thing; but Miss Cunningham would have disliked it more than any one, if she had not been occupied in watching for an opportunity to speak to her papa upon the subject of the dance. Margaret had suggested that it would be an inconvenient moment;

but Miss Cunningham never allowed time or propriety to interfere with her wishes, and eagerly seizing Lord Rochford's arm as he finished his conversation with Mr. Harrington, she drew him aside, and in an audible whisper commenced her entreaties. Lord Rochford listened, and smiled, and patted her shoulder, and called her his pet, and his darling, but at first did not seem quite inclined to agree with her, and all that she could obtain was the promise that he would think about it. This, however, did not satisfy her impatience, and she declared she would not let him go till he had really promised to mention it. Lord Rochford saw the impropriety of the idea, and the objections which Mr. and Mrs. Harrington might very naturally make to it; but his daughter's will was all-powerful with him, and he hesitated and half consented, and then looked at Mrs. Harrington, and retracted, till Miss Cunningham, seeing her advantage, became so very urgent that the attention of every one was directed to her. Mrs. Harrington could not help perceiving that the subject under discussion was one in which she was interested; yet she sat immovable, with her eyes fixed upon her work, thinking it contrary to all the rules of propriety to interfere; but Mr. Harrington was not so particular.

"You have a most indefatigable petitioner there," he said, as he caught Lord Rochford's eye. "I wonder you have not yielded long ago, from mere weariness."

"Clever girl, clever girl," said Lord Rochford: "knows her own power; but it is not my affair, or she would have had her own way before this, I am afraid."

"Miss Cunningham looks as if it were something in which I am concerned," said Mr. Harrington. "I should be most happy to give her pleasure."

"Yes, now, did I not say so, papa?" exclaimed Miss Cunningham. "I knew Mr. Harrington could have no objection. It is only that we all want a dance this Christmas, like every one else. There is the hall, which will do so beautifully for it, and every one will enjoy it so much; and I brought a dress here on purpose."

Dora's countenance betrayed her vexation, when she found herself included in the general "we," and she turned with anxiety to her mother's, when the proposition was made. Mrs. Harrington still kept her eyes on her embroidery, and appeared not to remark what was passing; but Dora saw that she bit her lip, and contracted her brow, and she well knew that a storm was at hand. Mr. Harrington only looked grave and pained.

"I do not think," he said, "this is quite the time for such an entertainment; and I should have hoped that Dora and Margaret's feelings would have prevented their wishing it. It is a different thing having a few friends in the house, to whom we are desirous of showing a little attention, and giving such a party as you mention. Even if we felt the inclination, which we are very far from doing, common propriety would be against it."

This was rather too long a speech for Miss Cunningham to listen to attentively; but she discovered that it meant "no;" and unmindful of the annoyance expressed in Lord Rochford's face, and his muttered "Yes, yes, to be sure, I told her so: girls are so obstinate," she hardly waited till it was ended, before she was at Mrs. Harrington's side, asking her most earnestly to consent.

Mrs. Harrington slowly raised her eyes from her work, and in a voice which sounded in Dora's ears like the murmuring roll of distant thunder, begged to be informed what it was she wished her to do.

"To have a dance," exclaimed Miss Cunningham, even then feeling but little doubt of her success : "a delightful dance in the hall ; just such a one as Sir Francis Egerton gave, at Tweeddale Park, last year."

"And may I ask," inquired Mrs. Harrington, calmly, "who Sir Francis Egerton is, and why his actions are to be any example to me?"

"Oh, he is a cousin of ours," replied Miss Cunningham. "Mary Egerton is just my age ; and she opened the ball."

"Indeed ! then, in my opinion, she would have been much better employed with her studies in the school-room."

"You cannot really be in earnest," persisted Miss Cunningham : "it was the most charming thing in the world ; and every one was so happy."

"Very probably," replied Mrs. Harrington, again returning to her work.

"That is so kind of you," said Miss Cunningham : "then you will have no objection. When shall it be?"

"Never, with my consent," answered Mrs. Harrington, rising in extreme indignation at what she considered impertinence and want of feeling. "My daughters have been strangely forgetful to allow such a thing to be mentioned. Dora, at your age, I should have thought you would have known better."

Dora instantly commenced an excuse, but stopped short in the middle, feeling the awkwardness of laying all the blame upon her sister, and her visiter ; and Mrs. Harrington, who had at first listened with the quiet determined air of a person resolved beforehand to accept no apology, turned from her, and began assuring Lord Rochford that she was quite aware that Miss Cunningham had nothing really to do with

the business—she merely acted as spokeswoman for the rest: of course, no young lady of her age would venture to make suggestions of the kind without being supported by others;” adding, “I blame my own children, not her.”

This was more than Amy could endure. She had been standing by Mr. Cunningham’s side during the discussion, with all the unpleasant sensations of being herself guilty; and her colour went and came, in the dread every moment that her aunt would include her in the reprimand. Margaret had quitted the room upon the first symptom of a storm; and there was no one but herself to vindicate Dora. It was a great effort, but she felt that it must be made; and, walking up to Mrs. Harrington, she said in a low frightened voice, “Indeed, aunt, I heard Dora, at dinner-time, telling them you would not like it.”

“That is right,” said Mr. Harrington: “never let any one be accused unjustly. I was sure Dora could not wish it. As for Margaret, she is so young and thoughtless, that it is not to be wondered at.”

“It is all very well,” said Mrs. Harrington, who was far too angry to allow of any justification: “but Dora should have prevented its being named. She is the eldest; and Amy, too, though so much younger, is quite old enough to know better.”

Poor Amy, for the moment, heartily repented having spoken, and returned to her former position with the thought that she had only made matters worse by interfering; but she remembered afterwards that she had meant to do rightly, and that it was better to be blamed wrongly than really to be in fault. Miss Cunningham, in the mean while, satisfied with finding that she had escaped censure, cared little what any one else might be feeling, and carelessly taking up a book of prints which lay upon

the table, began turning over the leaves with an indifferent air, much to the increase of Mrs. Harrington's anger, which was in reality, as much directed against her as against her own daughters, though politeness had induced her to conceal it.

The pause that ensued was felt by every one to be extremely awkward. Mr. Cunningham wished to make some excuse for his sister; but his nervous anxiety rendered his articulation more difficult than usual, and after several efforts he coloured deeply, and gave up the attempt.

Lord Rochford fidgeted, first on one foot, and then on the other, and at last walked across the room, to get out of the reach of Mrs. Harrington, who still stood looking as if she considered some one ought to make apologies; and seeing that something was expected from him, returned again to say that it was a thoughtless thing, perhaps, of the young people, but it would not do to be too hard upon them; they meant no harm.

"The excuse for every thing," was all Mrs. Harrington's reply; and Lord Rochford moved away with thoughts which it would have been very uncivil to utter.

"Come," exclaimed Mr. Harrington, feeling rather ashamed that so much had been said: "I quite agree with Lord Rochford, that no harm was intended. You know, Charlotte, they could not be expected to feel as you and I do; and besides, after all, we had thought of giving them something like an evening's amusement, though not quite what Miss Cunningham proposed. There is a celebrated conjurer just arrived in the neighbourhood, and we had settled that he should come here on Wednesday to exhibit, if the young people fancied it; and then afterwards, if they choose to get up a quadrille just

amongst themselves, I dare say Miss Morton will play to them."

Amy felt very much relieved at the turn which this was likely to give to the conversation, though she little cared what amusement was proposed, if she could only see her aunt resume her seat and her work ; but Mrs. Harrington appeared to be struck by the idea of a fresh person with whom to find fault, for she repeated quickly to herself, "Emily Morton! yes, she ought to have prevented it," and immediately left the room. Her absence at once caused a sensation of freedom and relief. Miss Cunningham, though inclined to imagine that conjuring tricks were rather vulgar, still felt sufficient curiosity to make some inquiries about them ; and Amy, to whom all things of the kind were entirely new, began expressing her pleasure to Dora, and when Mrs. Harrington returned followed by Miss Morton, the storm had apparently passed away. Miss Morton's countenance was as gentle and calm as usual ; but there was a slight nervous agitation in her manner which Amy had learnt to notice as the consequence of one of Mrs. Harrington's lectures ; and when, at Lord Rochford's request, she sat down to the piano, to perform her thankless task of playing and singing for the general amusement, her voice trembled so much as to oblige her to give up the song which had been asked for, and only attempt an instrumental piece.

Amy stole quietly to her side, and with a look and voice which were fully understood, asked if she might be allowed to stand by her and turn over the leaves. There was a tear in Miss Morton's eye, though she smiled and thanked her, but Amy's attention gave her at that moment all that she required — the consciousness that some one was near who could feel for her ; and in a short time she had recovered her self-command.

"Who was it I heard playing the airs in the last new opera this morning?" said Mr. Harrington, when Miss Morton had finished her piece; "whoever it was seemed to me to be getting on extremely well."

Amy was going to answer, but Miss Cunningham prevented her. "I was trying them over after dinner," she said; "but I had never seen them before, and therefore of course I made one or two false notes."

"Oh!" exclaimed Dora, "there must be some mistake; for if you remember, you were at the piano just before I went out for my walk, and I heard you say you found them so difficult, you wondered any one could take the trouble to learn them. It must have been Amy—she has been regularly practising them."

"I don't know, indeed," replied Miss Cunningham, angrily; "I never heard her."

"I dare say Dora may be wrong," said Mr. Harrington—"suppose you were to favour us now."

Miss Cunningham hesitated a little; but her self-confidence induced her to make the attempt, though it did not prevent her from blundering so sadly, that Mr. Cunningham, in despair at the discordant sounds, at length walked to the piano, closed the book, and said in a low stern voice, "Pray, Lucy, spare us any more—you must have known you could not play it in the least." There was no reply; for Miss Cunningham feared and respected her brother more than any one in the world, and saw that he was very much annoyed. Mr. Harrington began to make excuses for her, and was unwilling that Amy should play instead; but he was forced to yield to Mr. Cunningham's wish, and she was sent to the instrument; and, notwithstanding her alarm, satisfied every one that her talent for music was of a very superior

kind. Even Lord Rochford, though vexed at his daughter's failure, could not help exclaiming, "Very good, very good, indeed — very correct time — who taught her, Harrington?"

"Her mamma was her only instructress for several years," replied Mr. Harrington; "but latterly Miss Morton has taken her in hand, and I must say she does her infinite credit."

"Yes, certainly," said Lord Rochford, "very great credit, indeed. What should you say, Lucy, to persuading Mrs. Harrington to let you benefit a little by Miss Morton now, as a preparation for London? She would improve you, I dare say, even in these few days, and then when we are in London, she might give you some hints as she saw you wanted them."

"Really," said Mrs. Harrington, who thought this a very strange mode of appropriating the time and talents which were intended for the benefit of her own children, "it is quite useless to form any plans for London: I have every reason to be satisfied with the progress my children are making in the country, and shall not think of London masters at present; I have expressed my determination to your Lordship in a very decided way from the first."

"True, quite true," replied Lord Rochford, feeling that the refusal had been very decided; "only people change: but we won't talk of London, you don't wish it, I see; but I should like this young lady to hear Lucy play over a piece or two while we are here."

Miss Cunningham's countenance expressed any thing but amiability; and she gave her father a look which had often been found efficacious in preventing disagreeable plans, but his head was turned away, and she looked in vain; and the next moment he was at Miss Morton's side, praising her music, and

begging, as a great favour, that she would take a little pains with Lucy, and hear her play occasionally ; in fact, as Mr. Harrington had said, take her in hand for a few days.

Dora could scarcely forbear smiling, as she observed the expression of Miss Cunningham's face—it told of pride, mortification, and anger ; and Amy noticed it also, but she was not amused ; she was sorry for both parties : for whatever might be Lucy Cunningham's disinclination to become Miss Morton's pupil, it certainly could not exceed Emily Morton's unwillingness to become her instructress. Lord Rochford shared his daughter's dulness of perception ; and to complete the unpleasantness of the proposition, he spoke to Amy, hoping that she and Miss Cunningham would learn a few duets together. Poor Amy blushed, and tried, though with difficulty, to express acquiescence ; and Mrs. Harrington, observing her hesitation, reproved her for her rudeness, and assured Lord Rochford that Dora and Margaret would practise with Miss Cunningham whenever she wished it : it would be a more convenient arrangement, as Amy was only an occasional visiter ; and though she had played tolerably well once, she had not received by any means the same advantages as her cousins. Amy could almost have cried with annoyance, but painful as it was to be so undervalued and misunderstood on every occasion, it was, in this instance a very useful lesson to her, for it prevented the indulgence of vanity at being brought forward in so unusual a manner ; and when she saw how Emily Morton was slighted, and remembered her meek uncomplaining temper, she could only feel vexed with herself for caring so much about it, and long to possess a spirit as humble as hers. The events of the evening, though trifling in themselves, were not so in their consequence.

Miss Cunningham went to bed angry with her father, angry with herself, and, above all, angry with Emily Morton and Amy. Of the affair of the dance she thought but little, for she was not aware that any blame had been attached to her; but she had been foolish in attempting to play, and her father still more so, she decided, in teasing her with lessons, and making a fuss about Miss Morton, instead of depreciating her, and so increasing the difficulties in the way of the London expedition. Amy had been made her rival, and had gained approbation which might have been hers, and, above all, had been noticed by Mr. Cunningham, whose last words, as he wished his sister good night, were, that it would make him entirely contented to see her as sweet tempered, humble, and unaffected as Amy Herbert. With these feelings the idea of their both going with the rest of the family to London in case Lord Rochford gained his point, was most provoking; and very earnestly did Miss Cunningham hope that something might occur within the next two months to remove Emily Morton from Emmerton. In her absence Amy was too much of a child to be cared for, but together, they would form a very considerable drawback to the pleasure she expected; and she thought it would be preferable to give up the journey at once, than to be continually troubled with Miss Morton as an instructress, and Amy Herbert as an example. Amy went to her mother as usual, not quite satisfied with herself. The first elation had subsided, and she was aware of the evil feeling that had arisen in her mind, and at once acknowledged it to Mrs. Herbert; and then, referring to the dance, she wondered that Miss Cunningham could have been so blind to the impropriety of the suggestion.

"I should have thought, mamma," she said, "that Dora's face would have shown her she was wrong."

"It does not surprise me," replied Mrs. Herbert, "because the same thing happens continually with every one. Whatever we wish for we easily persuade ourselves is allowable."

"But there cannot really be any harm in wishing, can there?" said Amy.

"Only so far harm as it is the seed of all evil," answered her mother. "If our wishes were good, our actions would be good also."

"But there are a great many wishes which are neither good nor bad, mamma; wishes, I mean, that are of no consequence."

"I think that is a mistake, my dear: we are so ignorant that we never can tell whether even a passing thought may not be of consequence; and with regard to our wishes, the moment we see that we shall not be permitted to indulge them, we must try and get rid of them."

"I do not quite see why it is necessary," said Amy.

"Because," replied her mother, "our will ceases then to be the same as the will of God. There is a very fearful lesson given us in the Bible on this subject in the history of Balaam. He wished to go with the prince of Moab in the expectation of receiving a great reward, and God forbade him. His duty then was to conquer his inclination; but instead of this, he only obeyed outwardly, and still continued to wish, and at last he was permitted to follow his own way; but we are told that the anger of God was kindled against him."

"I see that he was wrong," said Amy, "but must we not wish for little things?"

"If we were quite good, we should never do so, my love: we should see plainly that even the smallest events of our lives are ordered for our good; and it is better to begin with controlling our wishes in

trifles, and then we shall not be led astray by them in great things. Of course there is no harm in wishing for innocent things, as long as it is permitted us to enjoy them ; but when they are put beyond our reach our wishes must cease."

Amy was too tired to converse more ; but although she felt that the idea was a difficult one to realise, she did not the less resolve on putting it in practice.

CHAP. XVII.

"I wish Frank would not make such a fuss about those stupid boys who are coming to-day," said Dora, as he left the room when breakfast was ended, expressing his great delight that Monday morning was at length arrived, and begging them all to make a point of coming down to the lake in the afternoon to see the skating: "it is bad enough to have a number of strange girls here, but really to be worried with rude boys is more than any one can bear."

"Perhaps they are not rude," said Amy.

"Yes, but they are," replied Dora: "I am sure they must be rude and awkward; I cannot bear them."

"But Frank, you can bear him."

"Oh that is quite a different thing—not but what he is a torment sometimes; but I do not want to talk about them now. Margaret, please, don't go away; just help me to settle how we are to amuse ourselves when the people come: I have had such a lecture from mamma this morning about making ourselves agreeable."

"Dear me, I don't know," said Margaret; "let them take care of themselves; I dare say they will find something to do."

"There is the conjurer for Wednesday," observed Dora, thoughtfully; "but there are two days to that, and what shall we do with them till then?"

"Really," said Miss Cunningham, "I should think there would be quite sufficient amusement in

being here, and seeing the house ; for you told me the other day they none of them lived in such a large place."

"Yes," said Margaret ; "to be sure, they can go over the house, and round the grounds."

"Round the grounds!" exclaimed Dora ; why it is going to snow hard."

"Well," replied Margaret, "I should never trouble myself about it beforehand ; when they come they will amuse themselves, and if they do not like it, they need not come again."

"That is not my way," continued Dora ; "it would not be very agreeable to be told they had had a stupid visit at the house of the first gentleman in the county. We must have more ways of entertaining them than they can have at home."

"I can't think, though, what they are," said Amy ; "but I dare say you will recollect something when the time comes ; and, you know, Dora, though I could not talk to any of them as you can, I could play with the little ones."

"Ah ! but I do not mind the little ones," said Dora ; "they will be very happy with a doll, and Emily Morton will take care of them ; but there are two or three great ones, the Miss Stanleys, and Miss Warner, who have always been at school ; I have not seen them, and I know they are coming early : people always do come early when one does not want them ;" and Dora looked at Miss Cunningham, and thought of the last Saturday morning.

"We might talk for ever," said Margaret ; "and it would be no good, and really I have not time to think about it now : do Lucy come to my room and look at that dress which you said could be altered like yours. Morris will have no time if it is not given her this morning, and I must go and talk to mamma before it is begun."

"That is just like you, Margaret," said Dora; "you never will help me; but mamma says you must try this afternoon, so it will be no use for you and Lucy to shut yourselves up in your room; you must come down, or she will be very angry."

Amy saw that Dora was gradually becoming extremely annoyed, and earnestly longed to soothe her; but she was rather afraid to interfere; she did, however, venture to say, that perhaps some of them might be fond of reading, and then there would be less trouble.

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Margaret, who did not quite like to go, and yet was very unwilling to stay; "that will just do, Amy; they shall read, and then they will all be quite comfortable, and we may go our own way; I am so glad that matter is settled; I do so hate trouble and fuss."

"So we do all," said Dora, angrily, as Margaret hastily ran out of the room; "only some people are forced to take it. That plan of yours will not do at all, Amy, and I cannot think how you could be so silly as to propose it. School girls never like reading, and if they do, they can have enough of it at home. What they ought to have here should be something to mark the place, something they should remember, something, in short, quite different from what they could find any where else."

Amy did her best to think, but it was all to no purpose; and Dora, at last, could only sigh and moan, and walk to the window, and watch the weather, and wish that the snow would come down, and keep them all at home.

"And snow Miss Cunningham in," said Amy, laughing.

"To be sure," answered Dora, "that would be rather odious. What a goose she made of herself

last night, Amy, and how delighted I was when you had all the praise."

"So was I, too, said Amy; "but I don't think I was right. I am sure, indeed, I was not; for I spoke to mamma about it afterwards, and she told me it was vanity."

"As for that," said Dora, "every one is vain."

"But then," said Amy, "we promised at our baptism that we would not be so; and mamma says, that persons who are vain soon become envious, and that envy leads to very great crimes, and that if we indulge in vanity, we can never tell how wicked we shall become by-and-by."

"I cannot understand why you are always talking of baptism, Amy," said Dora; "it seems as if it had something to do with every thing, according to your notions."

"According to mamma's notions, you mean; she reminds me of it so often, that I cannot possibly forget it."

"But there is no one in the world who has kept the promise," said Dora; "and then they say we have such a wicked nature: what is the use of thinking about being good, when we have no power to be so?"

"I do not think I understand it quite," replied Amy; "and I am sure, Dora, I cannot teach you, but I could tell you what mamma tells me."

"And what is that?" asked Dora.

"Mamma says," answered Amy, "that when we are born we all have very wicked natures; but that when we are baptized, God gives us a new nature which is good, and that when we grow up we can do right if we really wish to do it, because we have the Holy Spirit always to help us; and once, when I made an excuse for something I had done wrong, by saying that it was natural, and I could not help

it, she told me that it might have been an excuse if I had not been baptized, but that, now, it was no excuse at all."

"Then what are we to do?" said Dora; "no person really keeps their promise. How wicked we must all be!"

"Mamma says we are," replied Amy; "and that we ought to be so very careful about our smallest actions, and our words and thoughts, because it is so dangerous to do wrong now."

"But," said Dora, "I cannot see why people should be baptized, if it only makes them worse off than they were before."

"Oh! but indeed, Dora," exclaimed Amy, looking rather shocked, "it makes us better off than we were before, a great deal better off; for you know the service about baptism says that we are made God's children, really His children; and that when we die we shall go to heaven, if we try and do right now, and beg Him to forgive us, when we do wrong, for our Saviour's sake."

"I do not understand it," said Dora; "and I never heard any one talk about it till I came to Emmerton."

"I did not understand it half as well," replied Amy, "till mamma told me a story about uncle Harrington's birthday, and said that when we were baptized, we were made heirs of heaven, just as he was heir to this place and all the property; and even now it puzzles me very much, and very often I cannot believe that it is all true; but I try to do so, because mamma says it is, and shows me where it is written in the Bible."

"But how can we tell that we have a good nature given us at our baptism?" said Dora: "I never feel it; I don't think I do any thing that is right all day long: you may have a good nature,

Amy, and I think you have, but I know I have not."

"Mamma says," answered Amy, "that being sorry for our faults and wishing to do better is a proof of it; and you know, Dora, you often tell me how much you wish to do right, and sometimes, when I have had a great many wrong feelings, vain feelings, I mean, and angry and envious ones, the only thing that makes me at all happy again, is because I feel sorry for it."

Dora sighed deeply. "I wish," she said, "that the bad nature would go all at once, I am so tired of wishing to do good, and always doing wrong, and then I begin to think there is no use in trying. It would be easier if I could believe that it was true about baptism, because then it would appear as if there was something to help me; but I have always heard people talk about having such a very wicked nature, till at last it seemed foolish to hope to be good, as if it were impossible; not but what I do try sometimes, Amy," she continued, with a sudden impulse to be unreserved, which she had occasionally felt when talking to her cousin since their little disagreement. "I do try sometimes, though I dare say you will not believe it, because I am so cross. I meant to have tried this morning, only Lucy Cunningham made me so angry by the way she twisted her head about, and the nonsense she talked at breakfast, that I could not help becoming out of humour with every one; and when once I am annoyed in the morning, I go on so all day; but you cannot understand that, it is so unlike you."

"I can though," replied Amy, "for I very often am provoked when I watch Miss Cunningham, and hear her talk; but I try not to look at her, and to think of something else."

"I cannot do that," said Dora: "when she is in

the room, I find myself watching her, and listening to her, though I would give the world not to do it; for I am always longing to stop her, or say something sharp, and yet when I do, I am so vexed with myself for it. I know nothing will ever go right while she is with us."

"Then you will not be uncomfortable long," replied Amy.

"But," said Dora, "I know very well that it is no use feeling properly only when every thing goes as you like; what I wish is to have the power of being good always: there are some people who are never put out of humour—aunt Herbert for one; I long to be like her."

"So do I," exclaimed Amy, eagerly, "but then she is so very, very good; I don't think it is possible to be what she is: Mrs. Walton says she never met with any one like her."

"That is what disheartens me; good people are so up in the clouds, where one can never get at them."

"I suppose though," answered Amy, "they were not always so good: mamma often says she did a great many naughty things when she was my age."

"I wish she would tell me what made her better then," said Dora: "did she ever tell you?"

"No," replied Amy; "all that she ever told me was what I ought to do myself to cure my faults, and she said that she would pray to God to help me."

"No one will ever promise that for me," observed Dora, sighing.

"But mamma will, I am sure," exclaimed Amy, eagerly, "and I ——"

"Why do you stop?" said Dora.

"Mamma tells me to mention all your names in my prayers," replied Amy; "but I don't mean that that

would be the same as her doing so, because she is so much better."

"I cannot see what difference that can make : I should like very much to think you did it always for me ; but it must be such a trouble to remember."

"Oh no, Dora, it would seem so unkind not to do it, and if I thought you cared, I never could forget ; but some day or other, when I am quite good, it will be of much more use."

"Does aunt Herbert think that no one must pray for others but those who never do any thing wrong?" asked Dora in a tone of surprise.


"No ; she says we all ought to pray for each other, and that it is quite our duty ; but we are told in the Bible that very good persons' prayers are heard, particularly ; and so mamma says that is one reason for trying to conquer our faults ; because God will be more likely to attend to us then."

"I cannot think you ever had any faults to cure ; you never could have been ill-tempered."

"Oh, Dora, pray don't say so : it makes me think I must be so deceitful, for I am often ill-tempered, and I used to be so every day at my lessons."

"Then," said Dora, "you can tell me just what I want to know : what did you do to make yourself better ?"

"I used to talk about it to mamma," replied Amy ; "and one day particularly, I remember I was very unhappy, and thought I should be cross all my life ; and then she showed me a prayer which she had written out for me : it was taken from the Collects and the Psalms, and she begged me to repeat it every morning and evening, and once in the middle of the day, too, and try to think about it ; and she marked some verses in the Bible, and gave me a short prayer besides, just a few words to say



to myself when I felt that I was becoming out of temper ; and she advised me when I knew I had been doing wrong, in that or any thing else, to go to my room instantly, and pray to God to forgive me ; and after I had done as she desired for some time, and really tried very hard not to speak when I was angry, and to give up to whatever mamma wished, I found it much easier to be good tempered."

"But," said Dora, "that is so much to do. I never heard before of any one saying their prayers in the middle of the day : why should it be necessary ?"

"Oh !" replied Amy, "if people do not pray they never can have any help from God ; and the Holy Spirit, which was given them at their baptism, will go away from them, and they will become dreadfully wicked."

"It is right for people to say their prayers every morning and evening, of course," said Dora, "but I must say again, I never heard of any persons doing it in the middle of the day."

"I thought a great many people did ; at least I know I have read in the old times of some who said them seven times, and in the Bible it is mentioned. Don't you remember one of the lessons they read in the church about Daniel, and how he prayed three times every day ?"

"Ah, yes, in the Bible — but then in the Bible every one does what is right. I never think the persons we read of there could be like us."

"They did not always do right though," answered Amy, "because it very often says that God was displeased with them : you know how angry Moses was once, and how he was not allowed to go with the Israelites. Whenever I read that, I always think that I should have felt exactly like him."

"I cannot say I ever thought much about it," said Dora : "one hears it all in church ; but I always am so sleepy on a Sunday, that I cannot attend."

"But I suppose you are not always sleepy when you read at home."

"I never do read at home now : we used to do it when we were children ; for mamma taught us to read like every one else out of the Bible, but I thought of nothing but the hard words, and it always appeared a lesson book, and so I never looked at it afterwards. I forgot though, on a Sunday we were accustomed to read a chapter, but we have left off that lately ; I don't quite know why, except that we are too old."

"Too old to read the Bible !" repeated Amy, with a feeling of painful surprise that her cousin should have such ideas.

"I don't mean too old to read it at all," replied Dora, "but too old to be forced to do it."

"Mamma does not force me to do it," said Amy ; "but it seems to come naturally : the day would be quite strange if we missed it."

"Do you mean to say that you read it every day, or only on Sundays ?"

"Every day," replied Amy. "We always read the psalms and lessons the first thing after breakfast, except on Wednesdays and Fridays, and Saints' days, when we go to church."

"Go to church on the week days !" exclaimed Dora ; "who ever heard of such a thing ?"

"I thought it was what almost every one did," replied Amy ; "and I always fancied you would if you were not so far from the church."

"I cannot imagine what the good of it all is," said Dora.

"But it is ordered," replied Amy, "in the Prayer Book."

"I do not see that is any reason for it; its being ordered does not make it good."

"I once asked mamma some questions about it," said Amy; "and she told me that the Prayer Book was put together by very good men, who knew a great deal better than we do what was right; and that it was composed from the prayers which were used a great, great many years before, just in the time after our Saviour died, and that they had made all the rules about the service and the Saints' days, according to the old customs; and so now, it was the law of the Church in England, and every one ought to attend to it."

"Every one does not attend to it though," replied Dora: "at Wayland no person ever thought of going to church except on Sundays."

"I believe," said Amy, "the Prayer Book says there ought to be service every day; and there are regular psalms and lessons marked in the calendar."

"Perhaps so; but I am sure if people were to go to church as often as you say, there would be no time for any thing else."

"We generally manage to do very much the same on Wednesdays and Fridays as on other days: it is merely doing things at different hours."

"If I could only see the good of it, I should not care," said Dora; "but it is so strange to be always thinking so much of one thing; prayers at home, and reading the Bible, and going to church every day: I should get so tired of it."

"You would not be tired if you were accustomed to it, because it would come to you naturally, like eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and besides, it prevents one from going on wrong all day."

"How do you mean?" asked Dora.

"Don't you know," replied Amy, "that when things are disagreeable in the morning, and one is

put out of temper, it seems as if nothing would put one right again ?

" Well ! yes," said Dora, rather impatiently ; " go on."

" Then," continued Amy, " if I am cross, and the time comes for reading the psalms and lessons, or going to church, or saying the prayer mamma gave me for the middle of the day, it stops me ; because it seems so much more wicked to be cross in church, or when one is reading the Bible, than at any other time ; and then I get better, and set off again fresh."

" That is the reason, I suppose," said Dora, " that you are never angry a whole day together, as a great many people are : but I cannot understand where you get the time for it all ; does it never interfere with your walking or your lessons ?"

" No," replied Amy, " because we reckon upon it beforehand ; and when we are thinking of what is to be done in the day, we always remember that we shall be some time in church or reading the psalms and lessons ; and mamma arranges so as not to let it interfere."

" But still you must be tired of it," persisted Dora : " it is quite impossible that you should go on, day after day, and not wish for a change. I am sure I get quite tired of going to church on Sundays ; and I do not know what I should do if I were obliged to go every day."

" I don't like it always," replied Amy, while the colour mounted to her cheek ; " and I know I do not attend half as I ought ; but I am sure it makes the day go right, and mamma tells me it will be pleasanter to me every year ; besides I know that if it were not for going to church and reading with mamma and all that sort of thing, I should be so much more ill-tempered, and envious, and vain, than I am now, and then I should be wretched ;

for you don't know, Dora, what very bad feelings I have sometimes ;" and the tears started into Amy's eyes as she spoke, at the recollection of the last Saturday evening."

Dora was silent: her own faults were so much greater than her cousin's, that Amy's self-reproach was more bitter than any reproof could possibly have been. If Amy were so grieved at the remembrance of an impatient word, or a passing thought of vanity, what ought she to feel whose whole life had been one of pride and self-will. She felt, too, as if she had no right to attempt to comfort one who was so much better than herself; and stood for several moments looking at Amy with wonder and interest, till the striking of the clock recalled her to herself, and starting at the time they had spent together, she declared the day was half gone already, and there were a hundred things to be done before the people came.

"I had quite forgotten them," said Amy: "I think, Dora, I forget a great many things when I am talking to you."

"Do you?" said Dora, turning suddenly round to kiss her: "it cannot be any use to you to talk to me, because you have aunt Herbert to go to."

"I do like it though, so very much," answered Amy, "and I think about it afterwards; but I wish I could help you in amusing every one."

"I must leave them to their fate," said Dora, preparing to leave the room, "for mamma wants me, I know: but Amy," she added, stopping, and apparently desirous, yet unwilling to say more; "I wish — no never mind, now."

"O! do tell it me," said Amy: "is it any thing I can do for you? I should be so glad."

"No nothing, nothing," hastily repeated Dora, though her manner was at variance with her words.

"But you must tell me," said Amy, seizing her dress to prevent her going; "I am sure you mean something: can I look out some books, or put the room in order, or get any thing for you?"

"No, nothing of that kind; but, Amy, should you—should you very much mind letting me see the prayer aunt Herbert gave you?"

"Oh! if you would but let me give it you," exclaimed Amy, "for it is in mamma's handwriting; and I think you would like it all the better for that, and it is such a nice one: shall I go and fetch it?"

"I must not wait now," said Dora, "for I am after my time with mamma; but if you will put it in my room by-and-by, I should thank you so very much; and I shall always think of you when I look at it."

"And of mamma," said Amy; "and some day, perhaps, Dora, you will be able to talk to her as I do, and ask her any thing you want to know."

Dora shook her head, for she believed she never could be unreserved with any one but her cousin, and hastened to her mamma's room, with a longing desire that she could go to her for advice as Amy did to Mrs. Herbert.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:

Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

BOUND BY
WESTLEYS &
CLARK.
LONDON



